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Reardon, Kenneth
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Thesis

WINSTON CHURCHILL AS A HISTORICAL NOVELIST

by

Kenneth James Reardon
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Approved
by

First Reader.. Robert E. Moody .....
Professor of History

Second Reader.. Thomas R. Mather .....
Professor of English

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Introduction

In dealing with the craze for historical romance which swept over the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth Fred Lewis Pattee says:

"Viewed in the perspective of thirty years only a few of the volumes have escaped the oblivion that overtakes all work that merely copies the fashions of the day. Winston Churchill's trilogy, Richard Carvel, The Crossing, and The Crisis..... survives and doubtless will survive."[1]

Richard Carvel (1899) deals with the growth of opposition to England in pre-Revolutionary Maryland; with a comparison of the ruling class of England with the same class in the colonies; with the war at sea as fought by John Paul Jones; and, finally, with a brief glimpse of later developments in the conflict in America. The Crisis, third in point of historical time but second in order of publication, describes St. Louis just before the outbreak of the Civil War; attempts to show the coming conflict between slave-owing and abolitionist forces in this divided city; then carries on through the war to end in Lincoln's study in the White House. The Crossing opens in Revolutionary Carolina; treats of the expansion into Kentucky followed by the expedition into the Illinois country by George Rogers Clark; and closes with the purchase of Louisiana.

Pattee says further: "If Sienkiewicz with his trilogy Fire and Sword, The Deluge, and Pan Michael wrote the national

1. Pattee, The New American Literature, p.95

epic of Poland, then Churchill with his three romances has written the epic of the American republic. Only Mary Johnston has done work to compare with it."

Again: "The three volumes are more than mere romances: they are interpretations of America and Americanism. Centering in each of them is a philosophical explanation of the era, an interpretation."[1]

It seems to me that these remarks raise three questions. First, is Pattee right in believing that this trilogy will continue to survive? Second, has Churchill written the epic of the American republic? Third, are these more than mere romances? Are they in fact interpretations of the republic and of the qualities which have gone into its making?

The question of survival demands more than a consideration of the historical authenticity of the trilogy. That phase will be examined, to be sure, especially to determine how the author used his research material as foundation for his interpretation of his periods. Still, present interest in and ultimate survival of the books will stand or fall on the skill of the story teller in spinning his yarn, in developing his characters, in all the elements which make up the art of narration. Thus we shall examine this phase of the work as well.

After comparing the trilogy in some detail with such modern historical novels as Oliver Wiswell, The Tree of Liberty, and Gone With the Wind, we shall attempt to relate Churchill to the entire field of American historical fiction.

1. Pattee, The New American Literature, p.95

Historical Background

I. Richard Carvel

Our investigation here falls into four principal divisions. First, the pre-Revolutionary background of Maryland. Second, the causes of the Revolution. Third, the life and men Richard knows during his sojourn in England. Fourth, the Revolution as it is seen briefly in one aspect during the naval encounter between the Serapis and the Bon Homme Richard.

To begin with a brief synopsis of the plot: as a boy Richard Carvel joins the stream of rebel thought in Maryland even though his family is strongly loyalist. His villainous uncle Grafton tries to get rid of him so that he, Grafton, may come into the estate, but on the high seas Richard is rescued from a slave ship by John Paul. The two arrive in England, where Richard meets his childhood sweetheart, Dorothy Manners, who is now one of the reigning belles of London. After returning to America Richard joins John Paul, (now Jones) again, and is with Jones during the Serapis fight. Wounded, he finds himself nursed back to health in England by Dorothy and her mother. When they all come back to America the Revolution is over.

In reading the first chapters the reader might well ask: where are the workers, the artisans, the common folk who must surely have been a part of the Maryland scene? While Richard, born into the ruling class, might not have associated with such persons, we must have at least a glimpse of their life if we are to have an adequate picture of colonial Maryland.

John Adams wrote in 1777 that at one end of the social scale was the tobacco-raising aristocracy with but a few farmers, while at the other end the trades were followed, not by free workmen of standing in the community, but by negroes or by convicts transported from England. These persons were looked upon with scorn by the gentlemen planters.[1] They were supplemented by indentured white servants, who themselves were practically slaves.

The sons of the gentlemen were naturally not allowed to work or to learn a trade, but might spend their time in loafing, horse-racing, cock-fighting, or gambling.[2]

In allowing Richard to see the corruption of official life, the low moral standard of values in eighteenth century England Churchill contrasted this with the more elevated tone of life in Maryland--even while admitting that Maryland was a little England, and Annapolis a London in miniature. Churchill loved the gallantry, the nobility which he saw in these colonials so much that in his Afterword he says:

"No one may read the annals of these men, who were at once brave and courtly, and of these women, who were ladies by nature as well as by birth, and not love them." Whether we love or loathe them is no matter. It is our task to understand them. It is curious to hear such a note sounded in a novel which purports to be a paean in praise of the democratic ideal. How thin that

1. Lecky, The American Revolution, p.29
2. Ibid., p.29

note sounds in this oppressive atmosphere of time-killing vice!

Who, then, did the hard work of the colony? In Massachusetts the trade of silversmith was followed by a free descendant of French Huguenots, Paul Revere, while in Maryland we find convicts engaged in even this highly skilled craft. There were convict jewelers, too, as well as those engaged in the heavier trades of blacksmith, carpenter, weaver, shoemaker, plasterer, painter, and bricklayer.[1] This made for an unsound social order, an order which was resented even while it was utilized, "and the servant class became identified with the criminal class in the province. Nearly all the crimes mentioned in the newspaper were committed by or blamed upon convict servants."[2]

The author of the book just quoted, in writing to Robert E. Moody, professor of American history at Boston University, makes these observations on class lines in colonial Maryland:

"The common people did not develop a leadership of their own class, as you say; and the lawyer leaders in the Delegates did make it appear that their cause was everyone's cause.

"Lower-class leadership was not 'natural' or easily evoked in Maryland. There was so little urbanism, with opportunity for class consciousness and action---contrast Boston and Philadelphia. The patriarchal tradition of the English countryside, under the control of the squires, was deeply rooted.

"....Classes there were, but the idea of lower-class emancipation had hardly dawned."

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.35
2. Ibid., p.35

Since Richard's life is centered about Annapolis we learn nothing of the Maryland frontier. While such a knowledge is not necessary for the purposes of this novel we should be aware that colonial Maryland was not confined to the aristocratic Eastern Shore. Many of the usual aspects of life associated with the western frontier might have been found in this area of the province which lay to the north and west of the tidewater. In the decade just before 1750 we hear of wild animals threatening human life; of poverty-stricken settlers, dressed like Indians, living under the most miserable conditions; of hunters and other persons without permanent homes wandering about. Even in 1772, when Richard Carvel was a young man of nineteen, a customs official named William Eddis reported that dwellings on the frontier were crudely constructed and furnished; that life there was hard and plain.[1]

We learn from the novel almost nothing of the appearance of the capital city. We know that Annapolis was the center of gayety and fashion, but the remarks of visitors in the second half of the eighteenth century did not flatter the city. Burnaby, visiting in 1760, spoke with faint praise of the two hundred houses, the meagre group of public buildings, the solitary church.[2] At least one improvement came when in 1769 the assembly appropriated money for a handsome new statehouse, patterned after the exterior lines of the larger homes.

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.5
2. Ibid.,p.54

Dr. Alexander Hamilton, writing in the 1740's, found his chief objection to the province in the unhealthiness of the summers. He declared that upon returning home (to Maryland) he could see that there had been plenty of sickness and heat "by only observing the washed-out countenances of the people...for they looked like so many staring ghosts. In short I was sensible I had got into Maryland, for almost every house was an infirmary, according to ancient custom."[1] Perhaps Dr. Hamilton garnished his account with a bit of whimsy, or perhaps he was a hypochondriac, but there is nothing as unpleasant as this in Richard Carvel.

What manner of men were the planters? What was their aim in life, if any? Was it so much different from the ruling class in England, which so disgusted Richard Carvel? Of Maryland John Adams said:

"The object of the men of property here, the planters, et cetera, is universally wealth. Every way in the world is sought to get and save money; land jobbers, speculators in land, little generosity to the public; little public spirit."[2]

The planters formed an entrenched aristocracy which was in complete control, even as the corresponding class was in control in England. "Through the century as a whole the fortunes of all but a few of the people were determined by their connections with the tobacco-producing land."[3] Landed wealth here, as in England, gave social and political position. The gentry into which

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.
2. Lecky, The American Revolution, p.29
3. Barker, p.30.

Richard Carvel was born and in which he grew up resembled the squire class in England. In the period before the Revolution such families, usually in the third or fourth Maryland generation, were connected by marriage with the other families of the same class. The greatest estates of the gentry varied from about twenty to forty thousand acres. They are not to be compared on the same scale with those of English noblemen, nor with the vast holdings in New York, but they were the greatest in Maryland. Although the less well-to-do among the gentry might hold estates in several counties, they were often scattered about rather than forming one great estate. Many holdings ranged from a mere one thousand to five thousand acres.[1]

How did the members of the gentry amuse themselves? With an abundance of slave, convict, and indentured servant labor, the problem of leisure time was a serious one. In horse racing, which was a universal favorite among sports in the province, the official set took the lead. The Jockey Club, founded by Governor Eden and Ex-Governor Sharpe (both active in Richard's young manhood) which flourished for some half dozen years before the Revolution, encouraged inter-colonial as well as provincial racing. The horses of England were no finer than these of Maryland. Out of the latter came Man-o-War of our own time.[2]

Richard attends the colonial balls, some of them being held, as he says, at the old State House. He attends what he calls the first theatre in the colonies--presumably that built in

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.36
2. Ibid.,p.55

1772--which Barker calls, not the first, but the second permanent theatre building in the colonies. The capital had a variety of theatrical entertainment. The provincials saw Shakespeare, Gay's The Beggars' Opera, and the eighteenth century farces played by English troupes.[1]

Richard was probably too young to attend the gentlemen's clubs, thus allowing us to have a glimpse of them. The Tuesday Club is merely mentioned. Here it was that the most sophisticated of the gentry met. Although these clubs all had political and literary leanings in one direction or another, the emphasis was more social than political.[2]

Richard observes that in the eighteenth century the march of public events was much more eagerly followed than now by men and women, and even children, of all stations. Just how deeply did the rationalist thought and the witty conversation of the gentry and the professional men penetrate to the lower classes in the colonies? That would be difficult to determine. "There are a good many indications, however, that the irony, the satire, and the wit in the classical and secular, so common in the period everywhere, were not confined to the cultivated gentlemen of the Annapolis clubs. Gibbon said that eighteenth century literature breathed 'the spirit of reason and liberty' in England; so, in miniature, many a brief comment in newspaper and in personal correspondence shows that the abrasives of contemporary thought cut wide and deep in Maryland."[3] While this

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.36
2. Ibid., p.56
3. Ibid., p56

was written of Maryland, it may presumably be applied to the colonies as a whole.

Sailors were an important agency in gathering and spreading new ideas, which, picked up in Europe, they "carried overseas to sow in fresh, fertile brains....On landing, the men would hurry to the inns where an audience always awaited them. They carried much more valuable information than the gazettes. These unlettered sailors were imbued with the spirit of the new principles warring against oppressive tradition in France as well as in America...It was as though these rough sailors that the intellectual and political revolution which for years had been brewing in intellectual circles was to spread to the masses."[1]

The sailors congregated, like the residents of the community, at the tavern, which was the center of social life. It was a kind of library, too, subscribing to the newspapers printed in other cities, and also a combination circus and museum, very often accomodating traveling exhibitions and animal shows.[2]

Since the gentry was the ruling class in Maryland it was only natural that the House of Delegates should have served as the expression of the political and economic opinions of that class, although the wealth of the Delegates did not make them an ally of or subservient to the gouncil. On the contrary, they opposed themselves to the interests of the absentee

1. Thomson, Knight of the Seas, p.39
2. Kraus, Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution, p.47

proprietor and his representatives in the council.

Richard speaks of the depraved condition of the Maryland clergy, accusing them of fox hunting, gaming, of preaching illiterate and indifferent sermons, of immorality, and even of being drunk in the pulpit. We must make it clear, as Churchill does not, that the Church of England dates in its dominant position in Maryland from the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The reader who thinks of Maryland as a Roman Catholic colony throughout its history because its founder was of that faith is likely to wonder at Richard's sudden mention of Anglican parsons in the Established Church.

These same charges are repeated and even amplified in many other sources. We should consider, on the other hand, that the members of this clergy would have had little inducement to do otherwise than to reflect the not too serious attitude of the planters themselves toward religion. The grim earnestness in spiritual matters which was the very soul of Massachusetts Bay did not penetrate the more langorous airs of the Eastern Shore. The commercial and political interests of the planters crowded out the spiritual; It was only natural that some of the clergy, in Virginia as in Maryland, should have passed the time in secular pleasures.

Some of the clergy, making attempts at reform, did their best to raise the standards of their vocation. Free schools in every county were provided by statute, but faulty execution of the law rendered it almost abortive. Even the private teaching, which Richard receives for part of his school life from an

Anglican clergyman, was generally given in large part by indentured servants.[1]

Causes of the Revolution

The most significant points raised in Richard Carvel are those brought out in the presentation of the causes and development of the break with England. Richard speaks of the Stamp Act with its accompanying riots; of the question of taxation without representation; of the financial burden borne by the colonies in the French wars; of the tax on tea; of the closing of the Port of Boston; of the part played by George the Third, his ministry, and the friends of the colonies in England.

Churchill, speaking through Richard, (since the novel is told in the first person) places the entire blame for the Revolution upon George and his ministry. "I have tried to tell you, says Richard, "that the head of a stubborn, wilful, and selfish monarch blocked the way to reconciliation. King George the Third is alone to blame for that hatred of race against race which already hath done so much evil."[2]

Again: "The American Revulution was brought on and fought by a headstrong king, backed by unscrupulous followers who held wealth above patriotism."[3]

Although this charge demands extended consideration, we must first go back to the Stamp Act riots, tracing through the alleged causes of the Revolution.

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.51
2. Richard Carvel, p.449
3. Ibid.,p234

Maryland was in a state of economic depression when the Stamp Act was passed. Henry Callister, almost a bankrupt at the time, writes:

"All ranks of people here--seem to be in a state of bankruptcy, and not a little of fraudulent kind. It is madness now to sue for debts. If people are not able to pay, you must let them walk off or stay to defy you...We have no currency in Maryland, but that is imaginary. The real value of land, slaves, and all manner of property is sunk within these two or three years about one hundred percent or more in some parts."[1]

On June 24, 1765, Benedict Calvert wrote to his uncle, Sir Cecilius Calvert:

"Our trade is ruined, we are immensely in debt, and not the least probability of our getting clear. Our gaols are not half large enough to hold the debtors, upon every road you ride you meet people going from different parts of the province to get out of the way of their creditors. I can venture to say that the people of America were never in such a distrest situation as they are at present."[2]

Maryland was not alone. The colonies as a whole were distressed in the same way.

Churchill makes use of an actual person, Zachariah Hood, a merchant of Annapolis who returned from England to act as Stamp Distrubutor for the province; he describes the riot as follows; but tells us nothing of the grave economic conditions which

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.296
2. Ibid.,p.296

made the passing of the Stamp Act--unwise at any time--utter folly at this.

The last we hear of Hood in Richard Carvel is that he is hanged in effigy. Actually, unnerved by riots like this, Hood asked the advice of Governor Sharpe in regard to the wisdom of retaining his post. Sharpe had no authority other than to uphold him in the duties of his office. He offered Hood the sanctuary of his own residence, but the unhappy stamp distributor relieved him by slipping off to New York. There the Sons of Liberty shortly forced him to give up his office in that city. He returned to Mayland. Unable to resume his business there, he fled to the West Indies where, only a few years later, he petitioned the Crown for assistance in his extreme poverty.[1]

At this time Richard, although but twelve years old, has turned rebel. He raises now the issue of independence which was demanded by the colonies. He says:

"We younger sons, indeed, declared bitter war against the mother country long before our conservative old province ever dreamed of secession. For Maryland was well pleased with his Lordship's government."[2]

Is it true that the younger men were the first to demand secession? Later, when in London, Richard calls upon the governmental clique to read the petition to the King drawn up by the Continental Congress for proof that all his fellow Americans wanted was respect for their rights. That respect

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.300
2. Richard Carvel, p. 50

granted, they wanted neither war nor secession. When Charles James Fox intimates that Richard is not loyal the latter replies:

"King George has no more loyal servants than the Americans, Mr. Fox, be they Tory or Whig. And he has but to read our petitions to discover it."[1]

Here Richard is either being insincere, which he is not by character, or Churchill is being careless. The idea of separation from England existed, prior to 1774, only in the minds of relatively few. The actual call for separation came only from the scattered radicals. Not until January of 1776, when Thomas Paine published Common Sense, was the cry for independence broadcast through the colonies. Washington, in 1774, looked upon independence as beyond the conception of any intelligent American. Even by 1775, in England, the champions of American rights in Parliament did not consider the issue seriously. Burke stressed the need for recognition of colonial authority, not of supremacy or of separation. The Petition to the King, although repudiating the authority of Parliament, expressed a willingness to give allegiance to the King as head of the Empire, begging him to protect the colonies against the Parliament and Ministry.

The question of taxation, which lay at the very core of the trouble between England and the colonies, and which was responsible for both the Stamp Act and the tea tax riots, is given cavalier treatment in Richard Carvel. The issue of taxa-

1. Richard Carvel, p.298

tion without representation is likewise brusquely dismissed. One of the characters declares, in the chapter dealing with the Stamp Act riot, that by this measure the colonies are being taxed illegally, thus raising the highly debatable point of the whole dispute. There are involved here two vitally different conceptions of what constituted taxation without representation. In England certain old boroughs sent two members each to the House of Commons, regardless of their respective populations, while certain new cities recently grown up were unrepresented. Some boroughs, now unpopulated, were still represented--not by their own members--but by any person or persons from any part of England whom the lord of that district might designate.

"Persons living in unrepresented areas still enjoyed, according to the accepted English doctrine, 'virtual representation' which, indeed, was the kind enjoyed by the great bulk of Englishmen. Why then, they reasoned, should the colonies object to the same system?"[1]

They could not understand the different concept which, from the amount of freedom and self-government enjoyed by the Americans, had grown up in the new world. The administration there of the representative system, while by no means perfect, was more equitable than that in England. Districts were more carefully apportioned, while changes in representation tended to follow changes in population, although discrimination did exist between such areas as the seaboard and the back country. Usually

Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.300

the voter and his representative had to be from the same district. Not every man could vote for delegates to the various colonial assemblies, but all men--even negroes in New England--who owned a small designated amount of property could vote for representatives. The South, although more aristocratic in that only landholders voted, offered more opportunity than England since land was plentiful and could be obtained fairly easily. Too, in the freer atmosphere of the colonies there was no tradition that members for Parliament might come only from certain classes and from certain districts.[1]

While the Englishman asked only that taxes be voted by Parliament, regardless of whether or not his district was actually represented, the colonist demanded that taxes be laid upon him only by a legislature in which was seated a person whom he knew and for whom he had voted. To the American the Stamp Act was tyranny; to the Englishman it was simple justice; accordingly the two views were made more divergent by the lack of understanding of the colonial situation by the great mass of the English.[2] No reasonable man would deny that the law designed to raise revenue for the partial support of the army maintained in America for the protection of the colonies was unfair in purpose. It was simply unwise in application.

Before leaving this matter we should make it clear that the colonies admitted, in the Resolution adopted by the Stamp Act

1. Van Tyne, The American Revolution ,p.12
2. Ibid.,p.13

Congress in 1765, that the colonies not only were not, but by the very nature of their geographic position could not be represented in the English Parliament; that the only taxes which might lawfully be imposed upon them were those voted by their own legislatures.

Richard tells Charles James Fox and his friends that "the Americans had paid their share of the French war, in blood and money, twice over. And I had the figures in my memory."[1]

Unfortunately those figures remain forever in Richard's memory, for before he can recite them Fox launches upon a tirade of his own. Nevertheless, Richard expressed a general feeling among the Americans that they had ineed been weighted down by taxation, with a good part of it for the French wars.

"They had," Channing says, "borne their full share and more in the conquest of Canada. Parliament had repaid some of their extraordinary expenses, but in 1765, two years after the peace, they still owed three quarters of a million pounds sterling. Even in that year, when it was proposed to extort money by new duties levied by parliamentary fiat, Massachusetts was raising 37,500 pounds annually for the purpose of paying off her war debt."[2]

John Wilked, the English champion of America mentioned briefly in Richard Carvel, spoke in the same vein. In a speech to the Commons, February 6, 1775, he said:

1. Richard Carvel, p.299
2. Channing, A History of the United States? Vol.3, p.32

"In the two last wars, they gave you more than you asked for, and more than their facilities warranted; they were not only liberal towards you, but prodigal of their substance..."[1]

With the Stamp Act repealed, the inept policy of George the Third showed again in the tax on tea. Richard gives a correct statement of the grounds for the passing of the tax, insisting that although the Americans were to have the tea cheaper than the English themselves, this seeming generosity was due to the desire of the Crown to retain the principle of taxation. The news, as Richard says, was received with riots in Maryland. The newspapers played up the tea party in Boston with a campaign of inflammatory stories which prepared the way for the demand, in Richard Carvel, that the owner of the brig Peggy Stewart, bringing a cargo of tea to Annapolis, be tarred and feathered. Charles Carroll, of the radicals, wrote to a friend in England:

"If the present measures should be obstinately pursued, we have no alternative, and you would despise us justly if we could hesitate a moment between slavery and freedom...Hear what America is doing and tremble at the consequences."[2]

The closing of the port of Boston is mentioned briefly in Richard Carvel. Richard passes over this event, as he does too many, by regretfully saying that this is not a history. Too have a better understanding, then, we should know that:

"A circular letter had been received from Boston, even

1. Niles, Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America, p.425
2. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.369

before the Port Act could be printed in the paper. It asked for support against the tyranny of Great Britain, by means of a non-importation and non-exportation association. On May 24, within hours of receiving it, a number of merchants and 'respectable mechanics' of Baltimore met, and took vigorous action. They selected a local committee to correspond with the neighboring colonies."[1]

A group of inhabitants of Annapolis met to express their common cause with the people of Boston, asserting that "the act of parliament for blocking up the port and harbor of Boston, appears to them a cruel and oppressive invasion of their natural rights as men, and constitutional rights as English subjects, and if not repealed, will be a foundation for the utter destruction of American freedom."[2]

Churchill's philosophic interpretation of this period is superficial in that the underlying causes of the Revolution are discussed not at all. We have here the old view of tyranny and injustice, of a separation brought about by the despotism of George the Third. Of the commercial legislation of England expressed in the doctrine of mercantilism under the Navigation Acts; of the economic depression already spoken of which touched all the colonies; of the policy of royal consolidation after 1660; of the severe policy of England regarding the issuance of paper money by the colonies; of the racial, religious, educational, and economic differences which grew up

1. Barker, The Background of the Revolution in Maryland, p.369
2. Niles, Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America, p258

and served to estrange the two countries, we hear nothing.

Two policies worked against each other in colonial administration. First there was the lax policy of England during the years following the founding of the colonies when, instead of being rigidly repressed by the home government as were the settlers in New France, the men in the colonies of England learned the dangerously unsettling principles of self-government to the point where, like Massachusetts prior to 1660, certain groups became insultingly independent. Then there came, after 1660, the gradually tightening policy of royal consolidation of the colonies, climaxed, after 1763, by the attempt at a much more rigid enforcement of the Navigation Acts. Naturally this curbing of liberties already possessed was considered tyrannical. Had England dreamed then of the present Commonwealth of Nations it is very possible that the difficulties might have been adjusted and war avoided. At the time, England had no clear-cut, well-devised colonial policy.

A few men, to be sure, had vision. Burke proposed that England relinquish the right to impose taxes on the colonies; that the Americans should manage their own money matters; that the Americans should vote money for the maintenance of the empire at their own discretion--thus making for a system of taxation by voluntary grants.

Dean Tucker of Gloucester, whose ideas somewhat resembled Adam Smith's in this matter, proposed that the colonies separate completely from England; that England should declare them free

and independent; then declare a kind of Monroe doctrine over them with protection against foreign aggression. Since the idea of separation, considered as a matter of last resort, was not new, the Dean's proposal was given serious consideration by many.[1]

Some Englishmen, in refutation of the so-called 'spoiled child' argument, pointed out that to become spoiled a child must first enjoy an over-indulgence of maternal care. The colonies, they said, had received almost no care at all; that conditions were so bad in England that many were forced to leave; that if English colonies had not been open to receive them they might have gone to other lands and there developed into a real menace to England. Even those who advocated stringent measures against the colonies had to admit that England received benefits from them, since these persons insisted that if America were lost England would be ruined.

The bulk of English thought in this matter was not liberal in our sense of the word. Many asked: of what good was America if she did not pay taxes? Indeed, if she did not, she was in a position superior to that of the mother country. The latter would then be forced to bear more than her rightful share of the burden of empire. Yet, even if the Americans did contribute taxes, they were looked upon as inferior members of a system which, these same Englishmen insisted, knew no distinctions under parliamentary law. Others argued that if the Americans

1. Hinkhouse, Preliminaries of the American Revolution As Seen IN the English Press, p.113

were not kept in a subordinate position they would become dangerous to England; that colonials, by the very act of migration, should lose some of their rights as Englishmen.[1]

'Brittanicus', writing in the English press, expressed a general opinion when he said:

"I have always considered the Colonies as our tenants, whom I wish to have treated kindly whilst they are such; but when they usurp the inheritance, and tell us they are and will be independent of us, it is time to look about us, and keep them to the terms of their leases; but they seem to think that every degree of subjection is slavery."[2]

Yet Richard Carvel speaks in this vein to his English friends:

"For is it not true, gentlemen, that the great masses of England are against the measures you impose upon us? Their fight is our fight."[3]

Apparently the British soldiery, at any rate, did not care to make it their fight, since the Crown in 1775 found difficulty in raising troops to send against America. At least there was as yet no organ for the expression of mass opinion. The weak press was hedged in by restrictions, and there was no great amount of discussion concerning public questions.

Let us consider the other differences which hastened the estrangement. First, the matter of monetary difficulties in the

1. Hinkhouse, Preliminaries of the American Revolution As Seen in the English Press, p113
2. Ibid.,p.102
3. Richard Carvel, p.300

colonies was made worse by Parliamentary legislation putting down land banks and paper money while doing nothing to stabilize currency. The Crown established no mint so that the colonies might have their own regulated coinage. The standard coin remained the Spanish piece of eight. Too, the policies of the mercantile system were designed to drain specie from the colonies to England.

Second, in the matter of nationalities the Americans were no longer almost entirely of English stock. There were many Germans in the colonies; many descendents of French Huguenots; Swedish and Finnish stock in the area of the Delaware; and Dutch in New York.

"Moreover," says Channing, "the early English stock itself had lost many of the characteristics which one associates with the Anglo-Saxon. The presence of negroes, slave and free, had also wrought changes in the attitude of the white race toward the laboring classes in many colonies."[1]

Third, in the matter of religion there was a growing number of persons who attended no church at all. The Church of England, established in half the colonies, was trying to secure itself in the rest. This activity, especially as it manifested itself in a desire to secure a Church of England bishop in America, turned many men away from firm allegiance to the mother country.[2]

Different philosophies of life and of government held by

1. Channing, A History of the United States, vol.3,p.12
2. Ibid.,p.12.

Anglicans and non-Anglicans made for factions within the colonies. The Anglican tended to be conservative, a maintainer of the status quo, an upholder of the English government; while the dissenter, to whatever sect he might belong, tended to be progressive, even radical at times.

Fourth, in the matter of education we should note that America with her program of elementary education was rapidly outdistancing England. Although education as a system was not everywhere as firmly established as in New England, it had nevertheless spread through the colonies.

Fifth, England and America were also following separate paths in the matter of industrialization. While England was on the verge of the Industrial Revolution, America was still agricultural. England's mercantile policy further restrained any growing industry through such coercive measures as the Hat and Iron Acts, designed to put down such industries as England had herself.

Finally, was George the Third the chief villain in this drama? Was he solely to blame for the Revolution? Hardly. It is clear now that, foolish, baleful, and blundering though he was, he did not play through the entire tragedy to bring Valhalla toppling about his head at the final curtain, but wandered on the stage during the third act to complicate the situation and hasten the climax.

Dora Mae Clarke goes deeply into this question. She says: "Although George III was not responsible for the beginning of the American revolt, he prolonged the war by refusing to

accept ministers who wanted peace."[1]

Churchill gives the impression that the Revolution was a spontaneous, well organized movement. He says nothing about the intercolonial strife and jealousies which made almost for anarchy during and after the war. I leave this part of the discussion with a re-statement of the opinion of Professor Moody that each colony had a particular set of grievances; that as events hastened along just prior to the outbreak of hostilities the people, not realizing in which direction they were moving, merely accepted the political ideas of the leaders; accepted the slogan of no taxation without representation without actually realizing what it meant; and drifted into the concept of independence from a desire to maintain their self-government.

Richard in England

When Richard goes to England he is appalled at the buying and selling of offices which he sees going on. The gay young rakes in his circle think it a great joke, but Richard says:

"The very rottenness of the service was due to the miserable and servile Ministry and Parliament of his Majesty."[2]

The charge is just. With Crown officials buying up votes in Parliament, the King and his ministers were able to render Parliament subservient. "George III himself," says Miss Clarke, "advised and sanctioned this method of coercing support."[3]

1. Clarke, British Opinion and the American Revolution, p.248
2. Richard Carvel, p.281
3. Clarke, p.238

In April, 1775, George wrote to Lord North:

"I consent to Sir Watkin Williams being Lieutenant of Merioneth, if he means to be grateful, otherwise favours granted to persons in opposition is not very political."[1]

This lack of political morality permeated the entire ruling class. It was a closed,airtight corporation, quite indifferent to public opinion.

Neither does Churchill over-stress the gambling society of the time. The orgies engaged in by Charles James Fox and his friends at this most fashionable vice, at which Fox alone threw away over a hundred thousand pounds before he reached the age of twenty-five, could hardly be exaggerated.

As in Maryland, horse racing was highly popular, but although there was a certain amount of betting, the great evils which developed out of that practice were not yet.

These two pursuits were accompanied by heavy drinking. "Men would constantly drink two bottles of port apiece at a sitting, and sometimes three or even more, and would appear in Parliament, in the theatre, or in a drawing room in a state of drunkenness."[2] Churchill, while noting that drinking is popular, does not give as a peep at even one orgy.

The members of the ruling class lined their pockets freely from the public funds. There was no one, save a moralizing provincial like Richard, to censure them for it. Conceptions of

1. Clarke, British Opinion and the American Revolution, p.238
2. Hunt, History of England, p.257

morality in public life are lax enough in our own time, but in the eighteenth century they were almost non-existent.

Of the leading figures in English life whom Richard meets, Charles James Fox is the most prominent. As a character he is one of Churchill's best. The characterization, like that of John Paul Jones, is not merely faithful but alive. The all-night session at cards described in Richard Carvel is corroborated by Drinkwater:

"For some years into his early manhood Fox belonged to a company that would sit at cards from ten o'clock in the evening until six the following afternoon, a waiter standing by to remend their drowsy wits whose the next deal was."[1]

Richard marvels that Fox should be appointed a junior lord of the admiralty just before his twenty-first birthday, but such honors to one so young were not uncommonly given to sons of families whose wealth and position could command them. The wonder of it is, in Fox's case, that he did not then sink at once into the imbecility and inactivity of most of his contemporaries. Of Fox's public worth Drinkwater says:

".....if to find that corruption in your own house is even more intolerable than it is elsewhere; if to care more for honor than for gain; if to insist on toleration in thought and speech; if, in short, to have been, more perhaps than any other man, the origin of much that is best in English liberalism....then Fox's place in our national life is a secure and

1. Drinkwater, Charles James Fox, p.11

eminent one."[1]

The figures of Lord North, Burke, Garrick, and Horace Walpole, briefly sketched though all but Walpole necessarily are, stand out, like Fox, as real people. Most vivid of all is John Paul Jones. His sensitive, poetic temperament with its love of fine literature; his worship of fine dress which, with his veneration of wealth and social position made him seek the attention of men above his rank; his self-assertiveness which was strangely lacking in offense--all are strikingly delineated.

Valentine Thomson gives us the clue to one aspect of Jones' character which Churchill does not. Jones, in Richard Carvel, speaks of the time he spent with his brother William Jones in Williamsburg, Virginia, but he does not tell us that William was "ultra-democratic in theory" but "aristocratic in habits, tastes, pursuits, and prejudices. He lived sumptuously and wore fine linen...With such a man John Paul had, for the first time, experienced the real joy of living."[2]

There is one episode in Jones' life which is omitted entirely in Richard Carvel, and there is a related episode which is not followed to its conclusion. The latter is merely a story, but as it is, according to Thomson, true, and since the actual end of the affair gives greater verisimilitude for the hostile reception which Jones receives from his countrymen upon his return to Scotland, it is hard to understand why Churchill did not use it if he found it available.

1. Drinkwater, Charles James Fox, p.11
2. Thomson, Knight of the Seas , p.106

Here is the first episode. The mutinous carpenter, Mungo Maxwell, flogged by order of Captain Paul (who had not yet taken the name Jones) brought charges against the captain in the vice-admiralty court at Tobago in the West Indies. The court threw out the complaint as absurd. Maxwell died, a few months later, on another ship, but not as a result of the flogging. None the less, the Scotsmen who knew Paul insisted that he was to blame. Now a scandalous story has more potency than Churchill's version. Why should such a common occurrence in the eighteenth century as a flogging, and a light one at that, cause Paul's countrymen to revile him and make him eventually renounce his native country?

The other episode is more serious. This, too, happened in the West Indian trade, when the ringleader of a mutiny attacked Jones with a club. The captain, failing to spy a handy club with which to defend himself, took up his sword, hoping thus to intimidate the mutineer; but the latter, brandishing his club, lunged forward, fell on the blade, and was killed. The vice-admiralty court was not sitting at the time. Even had it been in session Jones could have expected no one to testify for him, since the entire crew was mutinous. He fled in disgrace to America, leaving his ship and all his possessions. In Scotland where his name was spread about as that of a common murderer, even his mother turned against him.[1]

The account of the battle between the Serapis and the Bon

1. Thomson, Knight of the Seas ,p.72

Homme Richard is, besides fast-moving and exciting, factually quite accurate. In following Midshipman Fanning's account we may wonder why certain slight variations occur, since they add nothing to the dramatic effect, but for the most part the author follows his announced purpose of making the account faithful to actual happenings.

When the Serapis approaches the Bon Homme Richard in the gathering dusk she hails, according to both Fanning and Churchill, in these words:

"What ship is that?"

Jones replies, according to Churchill: "I don't hear you," but, according to Fanning: "Come a little nearer and I will tell you."

Churchill has the Serapis call again: "What ship is that?", while Fanning has this call: "What are you laden with?"

The reply is, according to Fanning: "Round, grape, and double-headed shot,[1] while, according to Churchill, at this point Jones makes no reply to the Serapis, but says to one of his own men: "Pass the word below to the first lieutenant to begin the action."[2]

Then comes the first barrage. When several of the old guns of the Bon Homme Richard burst, killing some of the crew, many of the men, according to Churchill, run for the hatches, and Jones calls back: "Back, back to your quarters! The first

1. Memoir of Life of Captain Nathaniel Fanning, p.36
2. Richard Carvel, p.482

man to desert will be shot down."

According to Fanning, this order is given much later, after the two ships have locked rigging and are lying close together.

There are a few more discrepancies, but none worth the mention. The vital thing is that Churchill has fired the factual account with the color, movement, and drama of an epic event.

II. The Crossing

The novel begins with the birth of the central character, David (or Davy as he is called) Ritchie, in frontier North Carolina in the last years of the colonial period. When Davy is still a boy his father brings him to relatives in Charleston to stay while he (the father) goes off to fight the Cherokees. Finding these people hostile to him, Davy runs off and is taken under the protection of Polly Ann Ripley whose destiny, like that of the man she is soon to marry, lies in Kentucky to which the three presently hasten. On the way they meet Captain John Sevier, the idol of the frontiersmen, and George Rogers Clark, defender of the pioneers of Kentucky. When Clark musters men for the expedition which is to attempt to wrest the Illinois country from the British, Davy is brought along as drummer boy for the regiment in which Tom McChesney, Polly Ann's husband, is also enrolled.

A number of years later Davy meets Sevier again when the latter is finishing his work as governor of the short-lived State of Franklin. He also meets General James Wilkinson, whose brilliant but erratic star is rising over Kentucky as Clark's is sinking. Sent to New Orleans to secure information concerning Wilkinson's intrigues with the Spanish governor Miró, Davy informs us of Clark's intrigues with the French, and of the purchase of Louisiana.

We shall consider first the account of the early years of Davy's life; second, the description of Clark's expedition into the Illinois country; third, the brief discussion of the State of Franklin; fourth, the relating of the activities of Wilkinson; fifth, the history of France in the Mississippi in this period, including the exploits of Citizen Genet and the seduction of Clark into the service of France; and, sixth, the story of the purchase of Louisiana.

Davy's Early Years

When Daniel Boone visits the cabin of Davy and his father in North Carolina he tells of his trip across the mountains into the valley of the Watauga. Davy says:

"He spoke of leaving wife and children, and setting out for the Unknown with other woodsmen. He told how, crossing over our blue western wall into a valley beyond, they found a 'Warrior's Path' through a gap across another range, and so down into the fairest of promised lands."[1]

1. The Crossing, p5

While Davy does not actually say that Boone discovered this pass through the mountains it is clearly implied that he did. The real discoverer was John Finley who, passing through what came to be known as Cumberland Gap, returned with tales of the lush, rich land beyond, and easily induced Boone to return with him to see for himself.

Since this book is not, as Richard Carvel said of his own story, a history, we cannot cavil at Churchill for failing to set up cairns along his trails in the form of dates for the guidance of the student, or for not making an exact itinerary of the wanderings of Davy Ritchie. Such vague references as the following are typical. Davy is speaking of a certain battle in Dunmore's War:

"But in the autumn came tidings of a great battle far to the north, and of the Indians suing for peace."[1] This would seem to be the battle of the Kanawha, in the autumn of 1774. One wonders why, since it contributes nothing to the narrative, it is brought in at all.

Another reference: one evening, on their way to Charleston, Davy and his father stop at a tavern. The talk is of the Indian war.

"'Sir,' said one of the men, 'the British have stirred the redskins to this. Will you sit here while women and children are scalped, and those devils....Stuart and Cameraon go unpunished?'"[2]

1. The Crossing, p.7
2. Ibid.,p.10

We gather from this that Stuart and Cameron must be British agents, but although Churchill does mention Cameron's name again, he tells us nothing more of the joint activities of these two men. Yet it is clear that they are important factors in the Indian hostilities.

John Stuart and Allen (although Davy's father calls him Alec) Cameron were two such agents--presumably the same who in the summer of 1776 were engaged in uniting the Southern Indians, numbering about ten thousand, and the Loyalists for an attack on the Tennessee settlements and frontiers of the Carolinas and Georgia.[1]

Clark's Expedition

George Rogers Clark is the most vital figure in the book, dominating the story as does the analagous figure of Robert Rogers in Kenneth Roberts' Northwest Passage. The expedition to Kaskaskia and Vincennes is to The Crossing as the trek to St. Francis is to Northwest Passage.

Churchill leaps into the stirring episodes of this march with too little preparatory background material for a clear understanding of the Kentucky of those early days. Why, we might ask, was Kentucky called the dark and bloody ground? Where was Kaskasia? What was its strategic importance? Why did Clark wish to reduce the British fortification at Detroit, aside from stopping the Indian raids incited by Governor Hamilton?

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.46

To begin, why was so much blood spilled in Kentucky? After the expulsion of France from North America the British forbade the expansion of the American colonists westward beyond the mountains. They were forbidden also to invade Indian territory. The royal policy was a dual one: to prevent the ruin of the fur trade by permanent settlements in the area beyond the mountains, and to keep the colonies consolidated on the eastern seaboard. In this way colonial administration would be made easier and more effective.

But by the terms of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 the Six Nations turned over the lands between the Ohio and the Tennessee rivers to the Crown, whereupon the white settlers seized upon this as an excuse to move in. This was a kind of no-man's land among the Indians, where all the tribes merely hunted. The Six Nations had no more right to cede this land than any other tribe might have. Hence the other Indians, doubly resenting the coming of the whites, did their utmost to keep them out.

Secondly, what was the so-called Illinois country? Where was it and what did it include?

"The Illinois country included the territory extending from the Wabash and Miami rivers west to the Mississippi, and from the Ohio north to the Illinois. In the 'American Bottom' averaging from three to seven miles in width and stretching north one hundred miles from the confluence of the Kaskaskia with the Mississippi, were some 300,000,000 acres. The population of the four French villages within the area numbered, in

1778, between nine hundred and a thousand whites and some over six hundred negro slaves. Kaskaskia was the largest settlement, with its eighty houses, five hundred white inhabitants, and nearly the same number of negroes."[1]

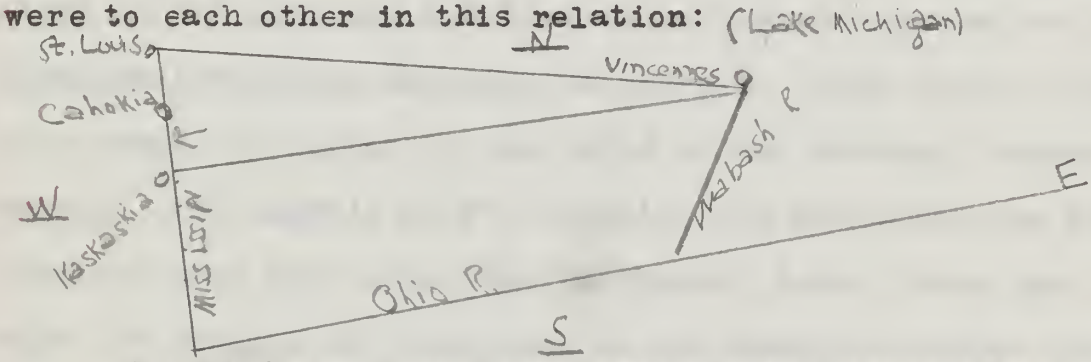
This region was not an unknown hinterland. Ever since 1765 many traders from Pennsylvania and Virginia had visited the French villages of Vincennes and Kaskaskia; trips which were continued up to the time of Clark's expedition. The evidences of permanent influence by the French during their soverignty over this region were slight. The Indians had good reason to fear the advance of the English colonist, who appropriated the territory he entered so that the red man soon found himself pushed on. They had much less cause to fear the French who lived, ate, and inter-married with them but did not crowd them out.

The character of the French inhabitants of these little villages with which we are concerned provides one clue toward an explanation of this evanescent French influence. These people, few though they were, had negro slaves, and the abundance of nature made life sufficiently easy so that no great exertion was required for existence. They were honest and conscientious in their transactions, but were as shiftless as they were cheerful and easy-going. The greater number were illiterate. Only a thin upper crust--perhaps a third--could be called well educated. Wives in the lower strata were as shiftless as

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.69

their husbands. There was considerable drinking and gambling but, oddly enough, relatively little drunkenness.[1]

Kaskaskia, or Kuskuskes as we see it spelled on the old maps, lay at the junction of the Kaskaskia river with the Mississippi, above the greater confluence of the Ohio with the Mississippi, and not far below St. Louis. Between St. Louis and Kaskaskia was Cahokia, which also figures in our story. To the northeast, on the Wabash river, and due south of Lake Michigan, was Vincennes, or St. Vincent's. Roughly, the towns were to each other in this relation:



England's grip on these western settlements was precarious. Her claims were contested by those of several of the thirteen original colonies, since their charters specified an indefinite westward extension (sometimes referred to as 'the South Sea') while England, which had granted these very charters, could claim possession only by her treaty with France at the close of the inter-colonial wars.

What was the importance of Kaskaskia to the frontier people? Clark expressed his opinion in a letter to Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia. The town was, Clark argued, located on the edge of the territory of several Indian tribes,

James, The Life of George Rogers Clarke p.74

so that whoever controlled the Mississippi at this point could furnish supplies and presents to these tribes--thus controlling tribes even beyond these. Also, the location just above the mouth of the Ohio would make it possible for the holder of Kaskaskia to dominate travel up and down that river as well. Of most vital significance was the fact that with Kaskaskia in the possession of Americans the British garrison at Detroit might be taken.

Early in this same year of 1777 there came successive raids on the Kentucky settlements by Indians spurred on by Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton at Detroit. Davy Ritchie speaks of a summer of horror in the forts at Harrodstown, Boonesborough, and Logan's at St. Asaph's. He hears the men cursing Hamilton whom they call 'The Hairbuyer' since, they say, he pays the Indians in proportion to the number of white scalps they bring back. Of this charge James says:

"Although it cannot positively be proved that Governor Hamilton offered rewards for scalps, Americans generally believed him guilty of this crime. That scalps were well paid for seems well established through the testimony of prisoners and of spies, disguised as traders, who visited Detroit... Hamilton's own dispatches indicate that the taking of scalps was by no means exceptional. In January, 1778, he wrote General Carleton that the Indians had brought in seventy-three prisoners and one hundred and twenty-nine scalps...."[1]

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.52

In colonial days, James points out, the Americans themselves had been guilty of this practice, "for at least one governor and colonial council gave its sanction by the offer of premiums for the scalps of enemy Indians and Tories."[1]

This was in colonial days, to be sure, but in the early days of the Revolution Washington was given power--after the Congress had first warned the Indians to remain neutral--not merely to employ Indians as auxiliaries, but to allow them bounties on all prisoners. While this was not giving carte blanche for 'hair-buying, it might well have amounted to that, considering the usual practices of the Indians.

Clark decided that the most effective means of securing the safety of Kentucky would be to capture these British posts without alienating the French in the area. To sound out the possibilities he sent Benjamin Linn and Samuel Moore thither as secret agents in April, 1777, to visit Kaskaskia and Vincennes. They reported that most of the French inhabitants not only had no firm allegiance to the British but that they stood in some awe of the Americans. Clark reasoned that the proper policy of firmness mixed with conciliation should win their friendship and loyalty. Consequently a relatively small force would be sufficient for the expedition. Since these men could hardly be recruited from the sparsely settled areas of Kentucky alone, Clark set out for Williamsburg in the midsummer of 1777, as Churchill relates, to propose his plan to Governor Henry.

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.52

Since this is all related in The Crossing, we are concerned here with a misconception only: that Clark mentioned even one word of his ultimate design of capturing Detroit to anyone at this early date. In The Crossing he is talking one night with Boone, before leaving for Williamsburg. Davy is listening. Clark happens to ask Davy what he would do to Hamilton under the circumstances, and Davy replies:

"'I'd go for Hamilton.'"

"'By God!' exclaimed Clark, striking Mr. Boone on the knee, 'that's what I'd do!'"[1]

Now while it might be all very well for Clark to say this to the fictional character, Davy, it must of necessity have been heard by Boone. There is no evidence that this remark or one similar was heard by Boone or by anyone else.

Although by his public instructions Clark had been ordered merely to the relief of Kentucky, by his secret orders he was instructed to capture Kaskaskia. "With no one, evidently, did he share his secret thought that after the conquest of the Illinois country he would march against Detroit."[2]

Churchill says that when Clark asked for volunteers from Harrodstown never "were volunteers mustered more quickly than in that cool April night by the gates of Harrodstown Station."[3]

I find no specific mention of this recruiting mentioned in the Clark papers. Such unanimous enthusiasm was not re-

1. The Crossing, p.132
2. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.114
3. The Crossing, p.139

ported by other recruiting officers, who found trouble in raising men.

It was not until all the companies had met with Clark at the falls of the Ohio, just above Louisville, that he disclosed his real objectives--as correctly related by Churchill.

As the boats set off down the Ohio an eclipse of the sun occurred. While Clark in his Memoir merely remarks that it caused various conjectures among the more superstitious, in the novel we have a good example of how such an incident may be made impressive by the writer of fiction. As the more superstitious men of whom Clark speaks quail at the sight, one of them asks Davy, who acts as the oracle of the expedition, what he thinks of it.

Davy replies, "'It's Hamilton's scalp hanging by a lock. Soon it will be off, and then we'll have light again.'"[1]

Clark picks up the remark, shouts it to the next boat, and so it passes along, raising the spirits of the men and quieting their fears.

Mention is made by Davy of the 'Long Knives' as the Virginians were known to the Indians and to the people in the French villages to which they were traveling. Roosevelt says that the term should be, more correctly, 'Big Knife', since in "most of the original treaties, 'talks', etc., preserved in the Archives of the State Department where the translation is exact, the term 'Big Knife' is used."[2]

1. The Crossing, p.147
2. Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, vol.1, p.162

Clark's Memoir of the trip is followed quite faithfully from this point on until the entrance to Kaskaskia, where the demands of drama carry the tale beyond the authorization of recorded fact. Clark, according to Churchill, challenges the fort in these words:

"'Open the gate! Open the gate in the name of Virginia and the Continental Congress!'"[1]

In the Memoir the fort is not even mentioned at this point. Too, the seizure of Governor Rocheblave in his bedroom is amplified from the few curt words given it by Clark.

C. W. Alvord, denying that the capture was a complete surprise, says:

"Clark's own narrative needs correction in one important detail. It pictures the occupation of Kaskaskia as a complete surprise and as causing a fear among the inhabitants scarcely to be understood in view of the fact that the latter had been bred among the dangers of the frontier and that there had been frequent intercourse between the French and the Americans for many years. When it is further known that the French had been warned of the approach of the Virginians several days before their arrival and had refused to prepare for the defense in spite of the urgent entreaties of their acting commandant, Clark's classic description of the poltroonery of the French must be very much discounted indeed. There had been no need of a conquest by arms; there had been an occupation by friends.

1. The Crossing, p.159

Clark's task had, indeed, proved an easy one."[1]

While Churchill agrees with Alvord in pointing out that the village was aware of the coming expedition, he also agrees with Clark on the matter of fear among the villages for the Americans.

Cahokia and Vincennes were likewise taken easily, although Hamilton himself, coming down from Detroit, later retook Vincennes. In the winter of that same year, through the partly drowned lands lying between Kaskaskia and Vincennes, Clark marched to recapture the town. This, at least, was no easy march. The fortitude of the men, spurred on by Clark's magnificent leadership, furnishes one of the great sagas of our frontier history.

Here again Churchill follows the Memoir closely. He has factual basis even for the character of Davy, for he tells how in a desperate moment the men were cheered and urged on through the deep waters of the drowned lands by a "comical little drummer" who "had afforded them great diversion by floating on his drum and other tricks."[2]

One discrepancy occurs toward the end of this march. When the men are within earshot of the gun at Fort Sackville they see, according to Churchill, a canoe appear on the river, coming from the direction of the fort. It is Captain Willing's brother (Willing was one of the expedition) who had been imprisoned, so we are told, in the fort. The Memoir makes no

1. C.W. Alvord, Virginia and the West, Mississippi Valley Historical Review. Vol.3, p.33
2. Quaife, Capture of Old Vincennes, p.121

mention of him, although it corroborates an incident mentioned a few moments later, when five Frenchmen come paddling along and are captured.

Before the men enter the town Clark orders them to display their stand of colors from saplings which they cut. They then proceed in a zigzag movement along the ridges so that their numbers, from the dipping and rising flags, may seem to be many more than they actually are. Davy says that this stand of colors numbered twenty; that it was made and presented to the expedition by the women of the frontier settlements. Clark does not say how they came by the colors, but he does say that the stand was "10 or 12 in number"[1]--not twenty.

Clark says nothing about one incident which Hamilton in his official report naturally stresses heavily. Clark's men, after seizing one of the British, a man named Maisonville, toss him about. In the tumble they slice off a piece of his scalp. According to Hamilton:

"Mr. Francis Maisonville....was set in a Chair, and by Coll Clarke's order a Man came with a scalping knife, who hesitating to proceed to this excess of barbarity on a defenceless wretch, Colonel Clarke with imprecations told him to proceed, and when a piece of the scalp had been raised the man stopp'd his hand, he was again order'd to proceed, and as the executor of Coll Clarke's will, was in the act of raising the skin, a brother of Mr. Maisonville, who had joined the

1. Quaife, The Capture of Old Vincennes, p.134

Rebels, step'd up and prevailed on Coll Clarke to desist."[1]

Which version is correct? All Davy sees in the incident is a typical bit of rough-housing, during which Maisonville's scalp happens to get nicked, while Hamilton makes it out to be a work of deliberate barbarism. It is clear, on reading the entire report, that Hamilton wished to place himself in the best possible light before his superiors upon being shipped back to England. Churchill's version is likely enough, and certainly more in keeping with Clark's character.

We may conclude with an estimate of the significance of Clark's exploit. Just what had he accomplished? In the space of one year, on what might be called the western front of the Revolution, he had expanded the soverignty of Virginia to the lands between the Ohio and Illinois rivers, and one hundred and forty miles up the Wabash. No longer could the British incite Indian raids on the frontier settlements.[2] Although Detroit was never subdued, the constant threat of Clark's possible conquest of that garrison placed a severe check on the depredations of the British and their Indian allies. After 1779 Clark's expressed policy was to center what men he had in Fort Nelson at the mouth of the Ohio.

"At no time," says James, "were the British prepared to reduce this post, although they were well aware that it constituted the key between the East and the Illinois country, that it dominated western trade and was the center for

1. Quaife, The Capture of Old Vincennes, p.195
2. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.153

operations against Detroit."[1]

The classical argument for the great importance of Clark's work is presented by Van Tyne, who holds that the possession of the frontier posts of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes was enough to preserve "the American hold upon the Northwest until, in the peace negotiations of 1782, the military prowess of Clark was followed by the diplomatic triumph of Jay."[2]

The diplomats, says Van Tyne, make no mention of Clark's achievements in their papers, but argues that the fact of that accomplishment must have impressed them.

C. W. Alvord presents a deprecating view. His opinion is that while the American commissioners in the peace conference may have felt stronger in their position regarding the Illinois country because of Clark, they would not have claimed less in any case, since Franklin at first claimed all of Canada as well.[3] The success of American diplomacy at Paris was due, he claims, not to Clark but "to the liberal principles held by a British statesman.[4] He held that a stable peace could only be made by ceding sufficient territory in the west for the expansion of the restless frontier population....and there seems never to have entered Lord Shelburne's mind a doubt as to the expediency of granting such extensive boundaries, even though the territory was garrisoned by British troops. He granted what seemed necessary to him for the completion of a permanent peace."[5]

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.285
2. Van Tyne, The American Revolution, vol.9, p.284
4. Lord Shelburne
3. C.W.Alvord, Virginia and the West, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol.3, p.35
5. Ibid., p.38

Franklin argued that generosity by the English would win the friendship of the Americans, who would not then feel resentful at being hemmed in on the seaboard. It was not until 1797 that the British at last withdrew their forces from the Great Lakes posts, at which time Shelburne wrote to a friend in America:

"I cannot express to you the satisfaction I have felt in seeing the forts given up. I may tell you in confidence what may astonish you, as it did me, that up to the very last debate in the House of Lords, the Ministry did not appear to comprehend the policy upon which the boundary line was drawn, and persist in still considering it as a measure of necessity not of choice. However, it is indifferent who understands it. The deed is done: and a strong foundation laid for eternal amity between England and America."[1]

James Randall points out that if one considers merely the small size of Clark's expedition, the bloodless nature of most of the action, and the lack of attention given the campaign by those active in the administration of the Revolution on the eastern front, then Clark's work does seem insignificant, but if "one reflects upon the stakes for which the game was played, the international bearings of the struggle, and the consequences of the backwoodsmen's victory, the conflict takes on the dimensions of a considerable episode in the drama of world politics."[2]

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.286
2. Randall, Clark's Service of Supply, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol.8, p.250

John Sevier and the State of Franklin

Before going into this section there are a few other points to clear up along the way.

At the outset of Book II Churchill promises to introduce us to a new Kentucky, a Kentucky which is no longer the land of the pioneer. In so doing he says he is going to pass quickly over several years. Immediately after saying this, he speaks of a terrible winter, "And unheralded winter of Arctic fierceness."[1] There was such a winter in 1779, but that was the year of the Vincennes campaign, for Hamilton surrendered to Clark on February 24, 1779. Churchill then goes on to speak of the land speculations and the chaos of the land court in Kentucky, of how the Indians were rising, and of how the services of Clark were again needed. Suddenly Clark himself appears, garbed like an Indian, before the land court at Harrodstown. Closing the court, he recruits men to follow him to the Ohio. This incident is corroborated so exactly (it occurred in 1780) that it makes certain one of Churchill's few factual errors. He cannot, as he says he will, throw to the winds some years of time when only one year elapses between 1779 and 1780.

Chapter III of Book II begins: "Two years went by, two eventful years for me, two mighty years for Kentucky."[2] Now when Clark closed the land court in Harrodstown it was the spring of 1780. Between that time and the quoted sentence

1. The Crossing, p.252
2. Ibid.,p.292

above there is apparently no break in continuity, so that it is now 1782. Davy goes to Richmond to study law, remaining there three years, which brings the narrative up to 1785. He speaks of political arguments over the new Constitution, "now ratified."[1] (In 1788) Yet he says that, after three years in Richmond, it "was late in September of the year 1788 when I set out on my homeward way."[2]

Now for the State of Franklin. We see the brief life and the sudden death of this abortive state largely through the progress of the feud between John Sevier and John Tipton. For one who has never heard of Franklin this cavalier treatment given by Churchill is likely to be confusing. Churchill tries to weave into the dialogue and action sufficient background material for explanation, but he is not sufficiently definite nor expansive. He tells us that Sevier had been head of this state which lay in the mountains of present Tennessee, over the range from North Carolina; that there were "certain conservative and unimaginative souls in this mountain principality who for various reasons held their old allegiance to the State of North Carolina."[3] We infer from this that Franklin stands in a kind of mother-daughter relation to North Carolina, but what that relation is exactly we are not told.

We need to know that by 1781 the Watauga settlement, which later became Franklin, had attained a large and vocal popula-

1. The Crossing, p.292
2. Ibid.,p.294
3. Ibid.,p.296

tion. Mutual disharmony between this settlement and the parent state, aggravated by the fact that North Carolina, a poor state, resented this added financial burden imposed by Indian defense and administration, brought on North Carolina's decision in June, 1784, to cede to the Federal government all of what is now Tennessee. Her authority was to prevail until the Congress should accept the gift. Unless that body accepted within two years the act of cession was to become void.

The frontiersmen in the affected area, suspicious of the weakness of the Federal government , complained that by this action they were left in a precarious and defenseless position, that Congress would most probably not be able to accept the cession within the two year period. Accordingly they followed a custom common in frontier communities which found themselves practically isolated from responsible government--a custom similar to the device used by the Pilgrims in 1620 when they drew up the Mayflower Compact because, about to disembark on land not specified in their charter, they did not want it said that they were to set up their colony in a state of anarchy. The Watauga people resorted, then, to this <u>association</u> or <u>compact</u> device, sending delegates to a convention at Jonesboro which met August 23, 1784. The convention, which chose Sevier president, gave its allegiance to the United States, not to North Carolina.

John Sevier was the leading and most beloved citizen of what later became Tennessee. Like George Rogers Clark he was a notable Indian fighter but he had the education which Clark

lacked, while his French ancestry helped to provide a strain of gayety which made him a witty as well as a polished gentleman. Still he was typically of the frontier, and it was there that he lived, worked, and died.

The same convention which elected Sevier its president also made provisions for the calling of a constitutional convention. Although the sessions of the latter body, when it met, degenerated into sheer anarchy, they did frighten North Carolina into repealing the act of cession. Sevier, who was never wholeheartedly for secession, advised his people to give up their plans. But they felt that they had gone too far to turn back at this point, so in March, 1785 Sevier was elected governor by the bicameral legislature of the new state of Franklin.[1] State administration was set up, courts were provided, and an academy for public instruction was instituted. A letter was sent to Governor Martin of North Carolina, stating officially the action taken. Martin replied in a public letter, in which he allowed the right of these counties to separate at the proper time, with the approval of the parent state, but, he said, this illegal separation would not be sanctioned.

Disregarding Governor Martin, Franklin drew up its constitution and the state assumed all proper duties and functions.

1. Benjamin Franklin did not realize until almost two years later that the state was named for him, since he knew of it only as the state of Frankland!

Serious trouble broke out in the spring of 1786 when John Tipton, Sevier's enemy and the leader of the anti-Franklin group in the new state, set up a rival state government. Soon two sets of courts and two sets of administrative agencies were operating. Since such a situation could hardly continue indefinitely, the official Franklin government was the first to go. It collapsed in 1787. The North Carolina Assembly, meeting in November, 1787, offered full amnesty to those who would again become citizens of North Carolina.

Churchill leaves Franklin tottering to its demise with this remark:

"We in Virginia had heard of two sets of courts in Franklin, of two sets of legislators."[1]

Churchill's habit of vague reference is evident in the following as well:

"Tipton and Martin and the Caroliny folks is burnin' mad with Chucky Jack[2] for the murder of Corn Tassel and other peaceful chiefs."[3]

Now Sevier, while fighting Indians on the frontier after the collapse of Franklin, entered the village of a peaceful Cherokee group, both sides being under flags of truce. As Churchill says, Corn Tassel was peaceful, but what was more, he was an active agent for peace, doing his utmost to prevent Indian raids on the settlers. One of Sevier's men, thirsting

1. The Crossing, p.296
2. Sevier was called "Nollichucky Jack"
3. The Crossing, p.298

for vengeance against the Indians--any Indians--upon entering the hut where Corn Tassel and the other chiefs had been confined, tomahawked them while his companions looked on. "Sevier's friends asserted that at the moment he was absent, but this was no excuse. He knew well the fierce blood of his followers, and it was criminal negligence on his part to leave to their mercy the friendly Indians who had trusted to his good faith, and, moreover, he made no effort to punish the murderers."[1]

The incident in The Crossing of the capture of Sevier by Tipton and a band of the latter's men clings closely to fact, although, for the sake of drama, dialogue is inserted which may or may not be similar to that which might have been spoken. Just one discrepancy occurs. In The Crossing, after Sevier surrenders, he is taken away by Tipton and his crowd. According to James Gilmore, Sevier was handcuffed and Tipton rode away after leaving Sevier under guard of a deputy sheriff and two of Tipton's gang, with instructions to take him to Morgantown.[2]

Sevier's followers pressed on, rescuing him when he was standing trial at Morgantown. Churchill uses the same account as that given by Gilmore in his biography of Sevier, published in 1887, in which Sevier made a daring escape in full daylight during the progress of the trial. Roosevelt says that the correct version is given by Haywood in his Tennessee, but that Ramsey gives this account and then "adds a picturesque alternative account--followed by later writers--in which Sevier

1. Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, vol.2,p.167
2. Gilmore, John Sevier, p.201

escapes in open court on a celebrated race mare. The basis for the last account, so far as it has any basis at all, lies on statements made nearly half a century after the event, and entirely unknown to Haywood."[1]

We may close our consideration of Sevier with a thought raised by Abernethy which is not even hinted at in The Crossing:

"There is little in his record to indicate that he was greatly concerned for the commonweal. His chief aspiration throughout the years was to build up a fortune in lands; and in order to understand his career, it is necessary to understand the land speculations in which he participated."[2]

The Activities of General James Wilkinson

In Chapter VII of The Crossing we meet Colonel Clark again, paling now in the blaze of the new comet over Kentucky: General Wilkinson, who seems to the western people to be the answer to their entreaties for an open Mississippi. Spain, fearing the expansion of the new republic, wished to hamper its encroachment by making of the Gulf of Mexico a mare clausam. Churchill gives an accurate account of Wilkinson's deal with Don Esteban Miró, Spanish governor of Louisiana: to allow Kentucky commerce to pass down the Ohio and Mississippi, thereby accomplishing what the Federal government was unable to bring about. Wilkinson is pictured as a thoroughly self-centered scoundrel, as he undoubtedly was, but the question has been

1. Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, vol.2, p.173
2. T.P.Abernethy, review of Driver's John Sevier in American Historical Review, vol.39, p138

raised by Thomas Hay as to whether or not he was actually a traitor.[1] He says that "no traffic of his with Spain ever betrayed any confidence placed in him by his government, but rather tended to hasten the transfer of...Louisiana to the United States.....In the legal sense of the term he was not a traitor; in the loose colloquial use of the term, as an appellation of unethical and slippery conduct and methods, this cannot be said with so much assurance."[2]

Hay points out that Wilkinson, if he was a villain, was not an unusual one in western parts at that time, when intrigues between Americans and the Spanish flourished in the Mississippi valley, and little but contempt was felt by the western people for the new Federal government. As a villain, Wilkinson was whimsical and quite charming. His chief aim was typical of the men of his place and time: to look out for himself first, last, and always. He and his kind felt that it "was not wrong to treat with an enemy, if the promises were not meant to be kept.. ...It was no disgrace to be a pensioner of Spain, if the pensioner continued to serve his own country. This dallying with Spain was common and was considered good conduct inasmuch as it fooled Spain and at the same time resulted in the accumulation of many shekels by the individual westerners. That he sold himself to Spain is indisputable; that he ever purposed or intended to do the work for which he was hired, anyone who understands

1. Hay, Some Reflections of the Career of Gen.James Wilkinson, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol.21, p.475

social and political conditions in the developing West of the period will find it difficult to believe."[1]

Although Clark and Wilkinson are shown briefly together in Chapter VII of The Crossing, Churchill does not tell us that it was Wilkinson who undoubtedly was responsible for Clark's decline in Kentucky. Abernethy says of the mutiny which occurred on Clark's expedition to the Wabash:

"It was Clark's expedition to the Wabash that gave his rivals their opportunity, and Kentucky politics a new turn. The mutiny which occurred in his ranks cannot be traced directly to Wilkinson, but it is clear that it was a 'political' mutiny, and that discrediting Clark was its object. Many stories were being circulated about his inebriety, and Wilkinson's hand is obvious here. Certainly the overthrow of the hero of Vincennes as the great man of Kentucky and the assumption of that role for himself was Wilkinson's prime objective, and the mutiny was the means toward that end."[2]

Davy Ritchie is sent to New Orleans to find out what he can about Wilkinson's doings, and what manner of arrangement he was able to get with Miró. Davy warns us that he does not intend to weary us with a recital of this business, referring us to a book of non-fiction, written by Daniel Clark, if we would learn more. Instead of uncovering the activities of the fascinating

1. Hay, Some Reflections on the Career of Gen. James Wilkinson, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol.21, p.475
2. Abernethy, Western Lands and the Revolution, p.322

Wilkinson, Churchill goes on to the development of the love affair which Davy must have at last if he is to have one at all.

We must know, then, from other sources that the trade concession which Wilkinson obtained from Miro was intended to be merely a temporary device preparatory to his grand scheme of carrying through the double objective of a colonization project on Spanish soil and, too, a western revolution. As a matter of fact, the revolution was first in Wilkinson's mind, and he was serious about it. "If Congress did not change its policy there was every reason to believe that the West would be prepared to make its own terms with Spain, and Wilkinson meant to be the leader in that movement. When he stated that he planned to be the Washington of the West he meant just what he said."[1]

On his first trading trip to New Orleans the General had no passport to carry him into Spanish territory, but Miro's reception was warm, he having heard that Wilkinson had been the cause of the abandonment of George Rogers Clark's expedition against the Natchez.[2] Wilkinson told Miro that he would have brought credentials from the certain prominent persons in Kentucky who had sent him had he deemed it safe to do so!

He returned to Kentucky with his boats laden with food and dry goods, Miro having urged that these be sold at cost, so that the people of Kentucky might be lured with this bait to engage in such ventures on a really successful basis. They might ship their produce down river, selling it in the New

1. Abernethy, Western Lands and the Revolution, p.330
2. Ibid.,p.328

Orleans market at a duty of fifteen per cent rather than the previous duty of twenty-five per cent.[1]

While in New Orleans Wilkinson had presented Miro' with his Memorial, in which he urged that the West be encouraged to revolt from the United States in order to give its allegiance to the Spanish king. The inducement: the navigation of the Mississippi and exclusive trading grants to Wilkinson and his crowd so that he might build up a Spanish party in Kentucky. Miro' was impressed with the arguments picturing the likelihood of secession, which Wilkinson argued was all but at hand.

Churchill gives a glimpse of Wilkinson's tremendous popularity in Kentucky upon his return from New Orleans. His later activities were hampered when the Treaty of San Lorenzo "which accorded to the United States and its citizens the right of deposit at New Orleans, removed most of the grounds for treating with Wilkinson", and "the transfer of Louisiana seemed to remove it entirely, but immediately the threat of invasion into and settlement of Texas and northern Mexico by grontiersmen and colonists provided a new basis for intrigue."[2]

France in the Mississippi Valley

Book III of The Crossing deals in part with the influence of France, during the period of her revolution, on the political thinking of the United States; with the activities of

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.396
2. Hay, Some Reflections on the Career of Gen. James Wilkinson, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol.21, p.447

Citizen Genet; and with the policy of France which led to the purchase by the United States of Louisiana. This material, which is quite full, needs no amplification here.

Most interesting of all, we find Clark accepting a general's commission in the army of the French Republic. Although still a young man, there was no career for Clark in the service of his own country, so, embittered as he was, he was ready to enlist under any banner. The total of his claims against Virginia reached the sum of $20,500, but these claims had been rejected by the legislature. Clark had previously declared:

"'I have given the United States half the territory they possess, and for them to suffer me to remain in poverty, in consequence of it, will not redound much to their honor hereafter. If I meet with another rebuff I must rest content with it, be industrious, and look out further for my future bread."[1]

Although a vivid picture of Clark's doings in this new rôle is given by Churchill, we should correct any impression gained from The Crossing that Clark, in these later years, was a sodden victim of alcohol. "That he at times drank to excess and lost some of his power and influence cannot be denied. Evidence is lacking, however, to prove that he was, for the most part, a sot after the Revolution, a statement which has been concurred in by most historians."[2]

1. James, The Life of George Rogers Clark, p.417
2. James, article on Clark in the Dictionary of American Biography, vol.4, p.130

The Purchase of Louisiana

Since this is dealt with in the final chapter of The Crossing, after almost two hundred pages of romance since the departure of Wilkinson, it is quickly dismissed after being couched in a style wholly foreign to that of the rest of the novel--a style which is heavily whimsical in its attempt to compress history into sugar-smeared reading. Here is a sample:

The Treaty of Amiens was a poor wind-shield. It blew down, and the chessmen began to totter. One George of England, noted for his frugal table and his quarrelsome disposition, who had previously fought with France, began to call the Man[1] names. The Man called George names, and sat down to think quickly..... George meant to go to war again. Napoleon also meant to go to war again. But George meant to go to war again right away, which was inconvenient and inconsiderate, for Napoleon had not finished his game of chess."[2]

Churchill gives the impression that Charles of Spain was an active participant in the negotiations leading to the treaty of San Ildefonso, by which France regained Louisiana. He says:

"Napoleon, by dint of certain screws which he tightened on his Catholic Majesty, King Charles of Spain...."[3]

Charles was a weakling. The real rulers of Spain were Maria, wife of Charles, and Don Manuel Godoy, her lover and also the prime minister. Napoleon offered to give to Louis,

1. Napoleon
2. The Crossing, p592
3. Ibid.,p.589

prince-presumptive of Parma and nephew and son-in-law of the Spanish soverign, the kingship of Tuscany. Louis would have the title of King of Etruria. In exchange, France would have Louisiana, which she would pledge to keep and never to hand over to the United States or to any other power.

The only hint of force possible here in the interpretation of the turning of "certain screws' is that Maria might have used strong persuasion in securing Charles' consent after she had easily agreed to the scheme.[1] One might think that Spain would get the worst of this bargain, as indeed she did, so the question arises--which Churchill does not answer--why did Maria and Godoy agree to it? The truth was that Spain, alarmed by American expansion despite all her attempts to block it, feared lest the Americans might attack her in the Mississippi valley from other quarters--perhaps coming eastward from the Pacific coast. She was too weak to face the prospect without quavering. She believed that with France pledged to keep Louisiana as a buffer state between the American frontier settlements and Spain's farther possessions, Spain might be able to rest in some kind of peace.

Napoleon failed to keep his end of the bargain, either by giving Tuscany to Louis or by keeping his promise never to relinquish Louisiana. Churchill says nothing about the question of legality which arose when the United States purchased the territory. France not only had not occupied Louisiana, and had

1. Johnson, America's Foreign Relations, vol. 1 p.237

not paid for it, but by the constitution of the French Republic the Consul could not of his own act part with any of the national possessions. Nor did the American commissioners, Livingston and Monroe, act with precise legality. Their instructions were to purchase merely New Orleans and the Floridas, but they acquired instead the whole of Louisiana when Napoleon offered to sell. Although they knew that Jefferson had available for the purchase only two million dollars, they paid sixteen million.[1]

Davy closes the too brief discussion with these words: "Louisiana had become American at last. Whether by destiny or chance, whether by the wisdom of Jefferson or the necessity of Napoleon, who can say? It seems to me, David Richie, writing many years after the closing words of the last chapter were penned, that it was ours inevitably. For I have seen and known and loved the people with all their crudities and faults, whose inheritance it was by right of toil and suffering and blood."[2]

In raising the first question above, Davy might have been helped to a decision had he been aware of Napoleon's attempt to subdue the island of Santo Domingo in November, 1801. The Consul sent an expeditionary force of some thirty thousand men thither, with the object, as Livingston reported,[3] of using the island as a base for the occupation of Louisiana--already ceded to

1. Johnson, America's Foreign Relations, vol. I p.249
2. The Crossing, p.593
3. Johnson, p.238

France by secret treaty--but not occupied. The resistance of the islanders coupled with the aid of yellow fever fought off the French, and since war in Europe made a pressing demand for men, Napoleon realized that if he could not conquer a small island he could hardly effectually occupy Louisiana. Besides, as Churchill points out, he needed cash for the coming war with England.

III. The Crisis

Stephen Brice, the central character, comes to St. Louis from Massachusetts in 1857. Although he has no violent Abolitionist tendencies, he soon aligns himself on the side of his future employer, Judge Whipple, when he attends a slave auction and finds himself buying a female slave for whom he has no possible use and whose purchase bankrupts him. He then goes to work in Whipple's law office, where he meets Carl Richter, who represents the finest type in the large German population of St. Louis which figured so significantly on the Union side. He also meets Virginia Carvel who, with her father Colonel Carvel, represents the Southern aristocratic point of view which clashes constantly with the rabid Abolitionism of Carvel's old friend Judge Whipple. (The colonel is a descendant of Richard Carvel, there is no continuity otherwise. This novel is not a sequel to the other.)

During the course of the Lincoln-Douglas debates Stephen meets Lincoln. Stephen, having to support his widowed mother, does not join the Union forces when the war comes, remaining

in St. Louis as a member of the Home Guard. When he does join the Federal forces he marches with Sherman to the sea. The novel closes in the climax of his love affair with Virginia Carvel.

We shall consider first the Lincoln-Douglas debates; second, the work of Frank Blair and Nathaniel Lyon in St. Louis; third, a comparison of Grant and Sherman in their civil life in St. Louis and in their military service, including the campaign at Vicksburg and the march from Atlanta to the sea; and fourth, the civil war in St. Louis followed by war in Missouri at large.

The LincolneDouglas Debates

Like Churchill's other historical figures, Lincoln and Douglas are authentic, vivid, and alive. No attempt is made to adorn Lincoln, to soften his manners and speech to make him shine to slightly better advantage in the accompanying effulgence of Judge Douglas. Churchill does manage, in portraying Lincoln as the coming statesman, President, man of destiny, and martyr, to place too glowing a halo over the head of this man who certainly never expected to go down in history as a saint.

Churchill goes in detail into the debate at Freeport, when Lincoln asked Douglas the embarrassing question concerning the possibility of inhabitants of a United States territory excluding slavery from its boundaries before forming a state constitution and against the desire of any citizen of the United States. Churchill has Lincoln say that he doesn't care if Douglas's answer of <u>yes</u> is sufficient to put the latter into

the Senate in 1858; that he, Lincoln, is looking ahead to 1860; that he wants to see Douglas safely entombed in the Senate. Speaking to his newspaper friend, Joseph Medill, Lincoln says:

"'I'll tell you why I'm in this campaign: to catch Douglas now, and keep him out of the White House in 1860. To save this country of ours, Joe. She's sick.'"[1]

This statement makes of Lincoln not merely a savant, but a crusader who wished to put Douglas out of the Senate race in order to save the country from him as President. Lincoln was a consummate politician, but not a completely self-less martyr with only the destiny of his country in his thoughts.

"In the campaign biographies of Lincoln, written two years later, in the heat and flurry of the presidential contest, and when he was the Republican candidate for President, the story first appeared that Lincoln and other party leaders held a grave conference over the question[2] and, when told that it and the reply Douglas was sure to make, would lose Lincoln the Senatorship, Lincoln said: 'I am after bigger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this.' No evidence has yet been discovered that anything of the kind took place. Nor was there reason for such a momentous discussion, and especially none for the exercise by Lincoln of that superhuman foresight attributed to him."[3]

1. The Crisis, p.145
2. At Freeport
3. Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, vol.1, p.656

The point is amplified by Barton, when he says of the above claim of foresight that "this is too much to claim in the way of political sagacity and foresight. Few if any politicians, with a high office within their grasp, deliberately sacrifice it for the sake of a larger possibility two years remote. The contingencies of political life are too many and too uncertain for such a gamble against the fates."[1]

Robert E. Sherwood's stage play and film, Abe Lincoln in Illinois, has done much to fasten the idea upon us that Lincoln cared nothing for public office. During the scene in which he and Mrs. Lincoln are watching election returns he astounds the politicians who do not know him by expressing no elation over his election. He is, indeed, more depressed--if that is possible--after he is President-elect--than before. It is true that Lincoln's peculiarities as a pronounced manic-depressive did lead him down dark and torturous passages, but the total effect of this play and of writings in similar vein is to create the impression that Lincoln had no ambition for public office; that it was the nagging insistence of Mary Todd which drove him into the White House. On the contrary Lincoln was, as Beveridge says, "inordinately ambitious politically."[2]

Churchill calls Douglas's answer to the Freeport question a heresy: "Judge Douglas, uneasy will you lie tonight, for you have uttered the Freeport Heresy."[3]

1. Barton, The Life of Abraham Lincoln, vol.1, p.393
2. Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, vol.1, p.636
3. The Crisis, p.159

Now it is true that Douglas was in a tight corner because of his previous attitude on the question of the extension of slavery into the territories; he was at odds with Buchanan's administration; but there is hardly need to make of it a moral issue. Douglas uttered no conscious or deliberate heresy; he made the best answer he could to an incriminating question; but his best failed to ease him out of a bad situation.

In speaking of this 'heresy' Lindoln himself said that the answer Douglas made was "'as thin as the homeopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had starved to death.'"[1]

Blair and Lyon

Chapter XV begins with a brief discussion of the rôles played by Francis P. Blair, Jr., and Nathaniel Lyon in the battle for Missouri which raged before and for some time after the Civil War broke out. For some unknown reason Churchill never calls Blair by name, but upon introducing him he tells us that he shall be known only as The Leader. It is puzzling why such a prominent person, of such an illustrious family, should be so hooded in mystery. Since Churchill tells us almost nothing about him beyond speaking of his vital importance to the Union cause in Missouri, we must investigate for ourselves.

Francis P. Blair, or Frank Blair as he was called, was a member of a family which, next to the Adams family, has been

1. Lincoln Talks, ed. by Hertz. p.148

most active and influential in American politics over a long period of time. Francis Preston Blair, the father, was editor of the Globe in Washington, and had been, says Lloyd Lewis: "spokesman and confidant of President Jackson, political midwife for President Van Buren, and altogether one of the most sagacious intellects in the Democratic party."[1]

He had, besides, been one of the founders of the Republican party in 1856. "For the Union Old Man Blair, as he was called, would wreck reputations, sacrifice friends, trick opponents, and play either lofty statecraft or low politics as the emergency might demand."[2]

His son Montgomery was Postmaster General in Lincoln's cabinet, while Frank Junior was Churchill's Leader.

What had Frank been doing in Missouri? "Since 1850 the old man had been helping Frank erect a powerful pro-Union political machine in Missouri by combining the ancient Jackson elements throughout the State with the huge German population in St. Louis."[3] This organization elected Frank to Congress in 1856, and again in 1860. From a harmless marching club, the 'Wide-Awakes', Blair created a Home Guard, drilling the men secretly for the time when the issue between them and their enemies, the secessionists, could be precipitated.

In Congress Blair proved a firm advocate of abolition, but argued that once the slaves were freed they should be trans-

1. Lewis, Sherman, p.152
2. Ibid, p.152
3. Ibid.,p153

ported to Africa.

Of Lyon Churchill says that he was one "who brooked no trifling. He had the face of a man who knows his mind and intention; the quick speech and action which go with this, Red tape made by the reel to bind him, he broke. Courtsmartial had no terrors for him."[1]

Thomas Snead[2] gives a less flattering picture of him. He says that Major Hagner, Lyon's superior at St. Louis when Lyon arrived, was the latter's senior in the service by five years, but Lyon had received his captain's commission twenty days earlier than had Hagner--since promotion in the ordnance was slower than in Lyon's division, the infantry. Still, Hagner was here Lyon's superior because he was commanding at the St. Louis arsenal under his brevet rank of major.[3]

Churchill would give us the impression that Lyon was placed in the infuriating position of having, as a man of destiny, to stoop below his rank to be subordinate to a "doubting major". Snead says:

"No regard for Hagner's greater age, or longer service;

1. The Crisis, p.250
2. We must bear in mind that Snead was Confederate in his sympathies. He was an aide of Governor Jackson of Missouri, who was a secessionist and a member later of the Confederate Congress. Although his book was published in 1886 he wrote it with an obvious Confederate bias.
3. Snead, The Fight for Missouri, p.124

no feeling of courtesy towards an older brother in arms, weighted with Lyon for a moment against the fact that Hagner was not an Abolitionist, that his wife was the daughter of a slaveholder, and himself the friend and associate of Southern sympathizers."[1]

There is no evidence to prove that red tape was spun by the reel to bind Lyon. What he did attempt to break was the ordinary matter of army regulations which stood in the way of his own purposes. Flaming with the zeal of a mission, mere questions of precedence and legality did not hinder him. As Churchill says, when he entered into partnership with Frank Blair, the latter used his influence with his brother Montgomery, as Postmaster General, to get Lyon what he wanted in St. Louis.

Lyon critizized Major Hagner freely, using the most extravagant language. When Hagner ignored his insistence that the arsenal be more strongly fortified, Lyon wrote to Blair:

"This is either imbecility or damned villainy."[2]

Of both Lyon and Blair Churchill says: "Both were the men of the occasion. If God had willed that the South should win, there would have been no occasion."[3] His reasoning is, seemingly, that if God had been on the side of the South there would have been no need for the services of these two men. Lyon then might have gone about slashing red tape all to no purpose. (Or

1. Snead, The Fight for Missouri ,p.124
2. Ibid.,p.130
3. The Crisis, p.250

plucking at his red beard, a nervous, unsoldierlike habit which Churchill does not mention.)

Such an interpretation can be pressed relentlessly. If God was on the side of the North, why had he allowed the cancer of slavery to fasten on the body of the South in the beginning? Lest a theologian rush forth with an answer, let us leave this unprofitable battle ground.

What of the net result of the work of these two men? We shall see later how influential Blair was in the state convention; we shall see Lyon at work in the affair at Camp Jackson. Although it is probably that Missouri would have eventually gone with the Union in any case, it cannot be denied that Blair and Lyon did inestimable service in shaping the destiny of the state in this crucial period.

Grant and Sherman

These two men are effectively delineated, insofar as they appear, against the background first of St. Louis and later of the war. No attempt is made in the early scenes to cover the fact that Grant is a failure in civil life while Sherman, at the same time in the same city, is president of a street car line and is a man of some substance. Both were inactive in the civil strife in St. Louis in the beginning, as Churchill says. While he cannot be blamed for not going more deeply into the lives of figures who are novels in themselves, we might well spend a little time amplifying the account we have.

Grant in his Memoirs says that there came a time, during his stay on the Pacific coast in the regular army prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, when he felt that he could not support his family adequately on his officer's pay. He lets us understand that he resigned of his own volition, while Woodward points out that actually his resignation was requested; that his leaving the army amounted to dismissal because of his fondness for liquor.

One can read passages in the Memoirs in which, while not actually lying, Grant creates a false impression by omitting some of the truth. Few men relish the recording of failure, but it would seem that Grant, writing this autobiography toward the end of a life which finally brought him fame and a place in history, might have been more honest regarding his early ineptitude in civil and army life. Perhaps the anti-climactic years as President and as a lamb in Wall Street made him realize fully his shortcomings in all fields but the military; made him unconsciously or deliberately color those parts of his life which do not reveal the successful man. Actually, of course, the latter are the phases which make him most human and most lovable.

Woodward remarks that when Grant left the service he said to a friend: "Whoever hears of me in ten years will hear of a well-to-do Missouri farmer."[1] Yet, although he was leaving the army because it did not pay enough, he was returning to greater

1, Woodward, Meet General Grant, p.121

financial insecurity in Missouri, where his prospects were even more dismal. Had it not been for the war, as subsequent events proved, whoever heard of U.S. Grant in ten years would have heard of a miserable failure; of a man who, on his wretched little farm, 'Hardscrabble', could not earn a mere living; of a man who hawked firewood about the streets of St. Louis; of a man who tried to see real estate in vain; of a man who at last, in the depths of despair, took refuge in the store managed by his two successful brothers. Only the war found his genius.

In the Memoirs Grant makes his life as a realtor sound almost impressive, but there is a heavy strain of pathos in his remark concerning the coveted post of county engineer which he hoped to secure. He speaks of it as "an office of respectability and emolument which would have been very acceptable to me at that time."[1]

The office would have been more than "very acceptable"--it would have been manna from heaven. It would have meant release from a job for which, like farming, he was wholly unfitted. His wife's people did not offer to help him further, perhaps because they felt that they had done enough in providing the farm on which he had failed. Perhaps they, as well as his father Jesse, were disheartened at the strain of kindness which seems to us now so touching, when we read that at one time "he had been an overseer on Colonel Dent's plantation, but he made pets of all the animals and was not firm enough with

1. Personal Memoirs of U.S.Grant, vol.1, p.211

the negroes to get much work out of them."[1]

When Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers for three months' service he spoke the cue line which was to send Grant from the wings of obscurity and poverty to the stage of national events. The beginning was modest: he served as drillmaster for the young men in Galena. From this point on there is a curious contrast between Grant and Sherman for, as we shall see, once the war was under way Washington did its best to induce Sherman to accept a command, while Grant's offer of his services--as a West Point graduate--to the War Department was passed by.

Sherman, too, had been on the Pacific coast, but he lived there as a civilian. He had been sent to St. Louis, earlier, to the commissary department of the army. When the inactive life palled on him he took the opportunity offered of becoming manager of a bank in San Francisco. In speaking of his empty life in St. Louis Lloyd Lewis brings out this point:

"He could not understand himself. Perhaps he remembered, at these times, the one period in his life when he had been swallowed up in the bliss of absorbed interest, the days when he had sat painting pictures hour after hour, lost to the flight of the sun as it passed over Fort Moultrie and sank behind the mists of South Carolina. His fingers, long and pointed, were those of an artist, his imagination was continually reconstructing the world as it ought to be. He was an artist

1. Woodward, Meet General Grant, p.135

without an art."[1]

As a banker Sherman became known for stability and foresight, but he did not remain at the business. He next became head of a military school in New Orleans, which he had to leave when Louisiana seceded from the Union. We next find him back in St. Louis, as president of the 5th Street Railroad, a post he filled most capably. Lewis says;

"It was child's play for him to reduce costs 20 per cent without injuring service, and the very ease with which he filled the post gave him an unfortunate amount of time to spend in retrospect."[2]

It is curious to contrast the attempts made by men of influence to get Sherman into action, once the war was on, to the obscurity in which Grant remained until, because there was no one else for the job, Grant was given charge of the drilling of a regiment. On April 6, 1861, Sherman had a dispatch from Montgomery Blair offering him the Chief Clerkship in the War Department, with the promise of the post of Assistant Secretary of War upon the meeting of Congress. Sherman refused, pleading his family commitments in St. Louis. He said privately that he would not enlist for a mere three months. He told his brother John, who was in Congress, that when that body placed the regular army on a firm basis, and he was tendered an acceptable place, he might consent.

1. Lewis, Sherman, p.87
2. Ibid.,p.152

The offer from Blair, if accepted, might well have made him eventually Secretary of War. Secretary of the Treasury Chase and Blair agreed on Sherman as the man who would be for all practical purposes Secretary of War. It was already clear that Cameron, the present Secretary, was not the man for the job. Within a year, as things turned out, Cameron had been eased out and Stanton had been appointed.

After the firing on Sumter, when John Sherman tried to induce William to go to Ohio and raise a regiment, the latter again refused to heed the prodding. Accordingly Governor Dennison of Ohio chose George B. McClellan, who not long after became head of all the Union forces.

In Misouri, Frank Blair asked Sherman to lead one of the regiments he was raising. Sherman refused. When he had gone to Washington to offer his services upon leaving the military school in Louisiana, he said, he had been rejected.

Next he was offered the post of General Harney in St.Louis. Blair, opposing the conciliation policy of Harney,used his influence in Washington to remove him. Sherman refused this job as well, pleading the lack of the requisite military training. Nathaniel Lyon was appointed in his place, being killed in the action at Bloody Hill shortly after.

"Having put from him three appointments at the hands of the Blairs and his brother John, Cump sat in his horse-car office. One of the appointments might have made him Secretary of War, the second, general in chief of the United States

armies, the third, a corpse."[1]

We meet Grant and Sherman next, in The Crisis at Vicksburg. The factual material is quite faithfully presented, but much of the action which concerns these events deals with the chief fictional characters, so that strict historical accuracy in this portion of the narrative cannot be expected.

Sherman's march to the sea, like the Louisiana Purchase, is quickly dispatched. Stephen Brice writes a letter to his mother, which is our only medium of information, in which he makes the march--except for certain discomforts in the way of mud and bad roads--a picnic. It was that, of course, for the Union forces. We gain no conception of what the march meant for the civilian population in its path.

Civil War in Missouri

The most significant pre-war act in Missouri was the struggle for the United States arsenal at St. Louis, which is dismissed in one page by Churchill without telling us the outcome. He tells us that it was a prize; that the regular troops were too few in number to defend it successfully; that if Lincoln sent Federal troops into the city the struggle between the two factions would have been brought into the open. But how much of a prize was the arsenal? In what relation did it stand to the control of Missouri?

1. Lewis, Sherman, p.160

There were two arsenals in the state: a small one at Liberty and this large one at St. Louis. The latter contained some sixty thousand muskets, besides cartridges, powder, field-pieces, and machines for arms-making--a tremendous possible acquisition for the Confederacy. Not only was this a more valuable storehouse than any seized in the lower slave states, but it was situated on low land overlooking the Mississippi, which, coupled with the fact that there was then no garrison stationed there, would have made it an easy conquest by a properly armed force.

Another possible prize for the Confederacy was the United States subtreasury in St. Louis, which held funds to the value of four hundred thousand dollars. Isaac Sturgeon, assistant treasurer of the United States, in charge of the subtreasury, was so concerned that he requested President Buchanan to send troops to protect it against possible attack by secessionist-minded Missouri state officials. General Winfield Scott, after talking with Buchanan, ordered that a lieutenant and forty men from Newport Barracks proceed to St. Louis to guard the subtreasury and the customs house as well. This move created a furious uproar among the secessionists, who were appeased for the time when General Harney at St. Louis ordered the troops to the arsenal.

This led to the alignment in opposition of two armed forces among the citizens. The Union organization of Wide-Awakes was now opposed by the secessionist Minute Men, the latter numbering some four hundred. Although the Minute Men drilled openly, making no secret of their intention of

capturing the arsenal, they were handicapped first by the belief of the pro-Southern party that secession should precede any such armed action, and second by the lack of arms and ammunition.[1]

The necessity for action caused by the appearance of the Minute Men brought about fusion in the ranks of the Republicans and other Union sympathizers. The Republicans, relinquishing their demand for the oath of allegiance to the party, asked of all Union men only that there be no talk of compromise. Although the Wide-Awakes were disbanded, under Frank Blair's leadership their place was taken by a genuine military organization which was armed partly by subscription in St. Louis, partly by a requisition from Governor Yates of Illinois, and partly from the gifts of sympathizers in Boston and New York.[2]

The call for a state convention to act on a resolution for secession was issued. Even the Union men expected that a secessionist majority would be elected. The forty men already in the arsenal were strengthened from the United States forces until, in mid-February, there were almost five hundred men in the city.[3]

Secessionist armed activity was halted when the results of the convention election became known. Despite the expectation of a secession victory, the reverse was so overwhelming that the popular majority against secession exceeded eighty

1. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War, p.125
2. Ibid.,p.124
3. Ibid.,p.128

thousand. Several of the largest slave-holding counties in the State gave the unionist candidates more than twice as many votes as their opponents....the referendum to the people was a staggering blow to the secessionist movement which was all the more effective in that it followed the unfavorable votes in Virginia and Tennessee."[1]

For this result Frank Blair was most responsible. His incessant labor for the Union cause had aroused the people of the state to the vital importance of the issue before them.[2]

When Governor Jackson did not abate his pro-Southern activities the Union men claimed that Jefferson City, where the sessions of the convention had begun, was a hotbed of secession, so the rest of the work was done at St. Louis. The secessionists planned a bold coup: they would raise a Confederate flag over the courthouse in the hope that when and if the Union men pulled it down a force of sixty armed men in the Berthold mansion nearby would fire, thus creating a riot. Governor Jackson would then call out the militia to restore order. With the State soldiers on the scene the arsenal might be taken over and the Union men rendered powerless. The plan failed when the expected encounter was limited to verbal battles and fistic engagements, climaxed by the refusal of General Frost to order his militia to attack the arsenal.

The convention found that there existed no valid cause for Missouri to leave the Union. The people came to realize

1. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War, p.124
2. Williams and Shoemaker, Missouri, vol.2, p.54

that Missouri belonged with the North, not with the South. Slavery had passed its peak in the state and was on the decline. Smith points out that the "taxable property of the State, which, aside from slaves, amounted to $315,000,000, would all be exposed to destruction in a war waged to protect slave property valued at only $45,000,000."[1]

Too, Missouri was not a state of large plantations. In most of the counties diversified agriculture on a small scale was the rule. Cotton was limited to the southernmost counties in which, where its cultivation was most profitable, slavery paradoxically played a minor part. In the year 1860 the slave population of these cotton counties was only 969.[2]

Again, the state was surrounded on three sides by free territory--a powerful argument for the Union cause--since, in the event of the state joining the Confederacy, slaves could escape on three sides.

Governor Jackson stressed the absolute necessity for the state to enjoy the navigation of the Mississippi which, he said, she could not do if she remained in the Union. He ignored the excellent railroad connections which St. Louis had with the East. Furthermore, the most influential people realized that if they went with the Confederacy they would not have their city as a link in the proposed transcontinental railroad.

1. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War, p.154
2. Williams and Shoemaker, Missouri, vol.2, p.42

Despite his victory at the convention Blair still feared that the pro-Southern men might get control of the arsenal, so he secured its command for Lyon. By the time of the firing on Sumter the Union strength was so great that there was no possibility of the Jackson men seizing the arsenal.

On May 10, 1861, the state forces at Camp Jackson surrendered to the Union troops under Lyon. The events of the day are recounted quite fully and faithfully by Churchill up to the conclusion of the exchange of fire which took over a score of lives. From that point Churchill passes to the evening of that day, telling us that a heavy rain, clearing the blood from the grass in Lindell Grove where the massacre took place. We may assume that during the balance of the day hysteria gripped the city, but we are given no details. Actually, a vital area of the city was taken over by a mob which shouted recriminations at the hated pro-Union German population. That night several of these Germans were murdered and their bodies left exposed in warning.[1] General Lyon who, with the Committee of Safety, could have declared martial law when the mayor proved unable to control the situation, seemed to have been paralyzed.[2]

Churchill gives us an indistinct picture of armed encounter in the streets, but it is too vague for identification. He is probably referring to the firing by citizens upon the Fifth Regiment of United States Reserves as it was marching in

1. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War, p.239
2. Ibid.,p.239

the streets. Virginia Carvel, who gets a glimpse of the fray, (if it is the same) is whisked off in her carriage before she can see that the troops returned the civilian fire with a total death list of two soldiers and four civilians.[1]

Encounters and excesses like these made the threatened Germans do some threatening themselves, making for the state of panic which caused many people, as Churchill recounts later, to flee the city by any possible route. We learn from The Crisis that with the proclamation of martial law the panic is averted, but we do not learn that it is done by General Harney, who must be the "wavering officer"[2] spoken of in the novel. In the absence of Harney, who had been called to Washington, Lyon had been given command of the Department of the West, which included Missouri. Now Harney was back, after Lyon had had a free hand at Camp Jackson. Wavering though Harney might have been, he restored the order which Lyon had not. He ordered the provocative armed Germans out of St. Louis; placed United States troops at strategic points about the city; suppressed crime and broke up all small gatherings. The armed citizens who had opposed the Germans, having no quarrel with the regular troops, were easily disarmed and placated.[3]

Thus began the civil war in Missouri which was fought within the framework of the larger war between the states. Churchill tells us of the last attempt at compromise made by

1. Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War, p.239
2. The Crisis, p.250
3. Smith, p.241

Governor Jackson in conference with Lyon. He quotes Lyon's refusal to compromise, saying that henceforth it would be war. Churchill obviously uses Snead's account since Snead, as Jackson's aide, sat in the conference. Indirectly he credits his source to a 'Confederate colonel', but he has no right to use Snead's words describing Lyon's actions as his own. In the course of his final speech Lyon rises to point to all the men in the room in order to emphasize a point. According to Snead the account runs thus:

"(rising as he said this, and pointing in turn to every one in the room)"[1]

According to Churchill: "(rising and pointing in turn to every one in the room)".[2]

At the close of the speech Snead describes Lyon's exit thus: "And then, without another word, without an inclination of the head, without even a look, he turned upon his heel and strode out of the room, rattling his spurs and clanking his sabre."[3]

Churchill uses almost the same words: "And then, without another word, without an inclination of the head, he turned upon his heel and strode out of the room, rattling his spurs and clanking his sabre."[4]

Churchill gives but the most vague conception of the fierce civil war which henceforth raged in Missouri, although

1. Snead, The Fight for Missouri, p.199
2. The Crisis, p.341
3. Snead, p.200
4. The Crisis, p.341

this is undoubtedly inevitable since the action of most of the narrative is confined to St. Louis. He speaks of the battle of Wilson's Creek, at which Lyon was killed, which was lost for the Union. The tide was turned in March, 1862, with the battle of Pea Ridge. "The moral effect of the victory was far-reaching. The high hopes of Missouri's pro-Southerners were abjectly prostrated. Many fled into southern territory with such tales of Union strength that southern spirits were measureably lowered... ..It is true that Missouri was not freed of civil strife, but by far the greater part of the fighting which was to take place within her borders during the next three years was to be but robbery and murder under the pretext of war."[1]

Churchill's statement that Lyon saved Missouri is borne out by Snead:

"Lyon had not fought and died in vain. Through him the rebellion which Blair had organized, and to which he had himself given force and strength, had succeeded at last.....By wisely planning, by boldly doing, and by bravely dying, he had won the fight for Missouri."[2]

We may wonder why Churchill says nothing of the passage of Missouri's act of secession, on October 28, 1861, by the secession legislature which convened at Neosho after Lyon had taken over the capital, Jefferson City. Upon adjourning it arranged to meet in March, 1862, but failed to do so.

1. Williams and Shoemaker, Missouri, vol.2, p.89
2. Snead, The Fight for Missouri, p.393

The Trilogy as Literature

1. Churchill's Method of Writing

An author of historical fiction of the present day will reach the zenith of scientific thoroughness in research when, like Elizabeth Page writing The Tree of Liberty, he not only carefully documents his source material and secondary reading, but states where and under what conditions he did his research. Such exactitude belongs only to the modern school. Mr. Churchill tells me that for Richard Carvel he steeped himself "in the history of Maryland and of Revolutionary times in general"; for The Crisis he went to St. Louis and "spent a winter going through the files of the Civil War newspapers and reading contemporary accounts, and talking to people who had lived through the times"; for The Crossing he "made the same researches, and went to Tennessee and paid a brief visit to the mountains."

Since he mentioned no specific sources I asked if he could give me more definite information. I suspected that he must have used Roosevelt's Winning of the West, Clark's Memoir, and I knew from internal evidence that he had used Snead's The Fight for Missouri. He replied that he had indeed used Roosevelt's work which, he says, "I found most helpful". This letter was dated April 16, 1941. He said that he was on his way home where "there are some books...which I collected when I wrote my novels, although many of these have been lost. I will see what they are and let you know." When I receive this

information I shall place it in an appendix.

Of Mr. Churchill's well known historical thoroughness he himself says: "I was always more or less meticulous about getting at facts, and hated to take liberties with them in my work. But I put this down to a passion for knowing how things happened myself, and to live myself over with them, as it were."

After actually immersing himself in the atmosphere of the period which he had re-created he had this experience: "I found by degrees that a story gradually formed itself in my mind--or rather the germ or beginning of one. As in all my novels, I wrote a draft, or rather tried to write the book trusting the plot would develop. It never did so on the first draft, and--with the exception of Mr. Crewe's Career--not on the second. The third found it completed."

Although instant fame and great financial success came early to him, he refused to be hurried by the demands of public or publishers. "I was," he says, "about two years gathering material for these historical books and writing and rewriting." The books in the trilogy appeared, then, over a period of six years.

In a letter dated May 1, 1941, he says:"....I have regarded myself as an imitator of Thackeray. When I wrote my books I was very young and inexperienced, and was under the delusion that one must take some other writer as a model. I regard this as anything but a justification. I had had no literary training, and I came from people who regarded a writer,

or rather a novelist, as someone who had definitely gone wrong."

When Richard Carvel, Mr. Churchill's second novel, was published in 1899, he was only twenty-nine years old. The fact that he refused to rush into print again almost at once, together with the fact that The Crisis is a distinct artistic advance over Richard Carvel, is a tribute to the high seriousness of the author. Richard Carvel is, as Mr. Churchill says, imitative of Thackeray, and although it is an excellent job, the seeds of artistic greatness do not yield in the soil of imitation. There is nothing of Thackeray in The Crossing, which is thoroughly indigenous to America. One wonders what Mr. Churchill might not have done had not the sudden collapse of the demand for historical fiction determined him to go over to the field of sociological fiction.

All these points must be borne in mind as we try to evaluate the trilogy as literature. The judgments reached will have no relation to Mr. Churchill's non-historical novels. That is matter for a monograph by itself.

II. Richard Carvel

This novel is true to the general characteristics of the romance of the Nineties: "Primarily a costume romance, hence fond of the times when small clothes were rich and worthy a gentleman's wearing. Much made of wigs, silk stockings, swords, snuff boxes, wines, food, gout; a painstaking endeavor to be historically correct in manners and talk; the language fashioned in the writer's workshop and embroidered with genteel archaisms.

Definite character types--from Thackeray. The heroine capricious, imperious, clever, hard to win but greatly worth winning--a brunette, small, graceful, with a sharp tongue for her cavalier. The hero strong, tall, broad-shouldered, a skilful swordsman, faithful, adoring, long-suffering, stupid, whose love leads through duels to domestic bliss.....It is the small clothes and manners that lend romantic interest, rather than action."[1]

This describes Richard Carvel and Dorothy Manners to the life. It is significant that Churchill was not alone in his imitation of Thackeray, that, according to Orians, he would have alone had he not borrowed from the great English writer.

If one can disregard the irritation incident to following the annoying love affair one will find passages of fine, exciting prose in this novel. Especially good are those dealing with Richard's fast-moving life in London, and those describing the Serapis-Bon Homme Richard battle.

II. The Crossing

This novel is refreshingly free of the clichés which mar the other two. It is refreshing, too, to find for the first time a love affair which is open and honest, with no coy flirting around. Unfortunately it is not concerned with Davy Ritchie, the hero, but with Polly Ann Ripley and Tom McChesney, whose lowly estate allows them to be rational human beings. It is regrettable that Polly Ann could not have been the heroine, but that elevation, with the necessity for the exercise of noble

1. Orians, A Short History of American Literature, p.242

emotions and for making sure that one would never suspect she might have a grain of intelligence, would doubtless have been the ruin of her. As it is, she freely admits she loves Tom, and intends to marry him. When he returns from his expedition into the wilderness of Kentucky they are married without delay. There is great work to be done in making a new home in the Dark and Bloody Ground, and these young people cannot fritter away their time in love play.

Too, since Polly Ann was not born into the Churchill ruling class, she does not have to be a wit. Her rejoinders to the banter of the frontiersmen are as obvious as their sallies. Here she is putting a young buck in his place:

"'My beauty,' says he, as we sat at supper, 'silver and Wedgewood better become you than pewter and a trencher.'

"'And I reckon a rope would sit better on your neck than a ruff,' retorted Polly Ann, while the company shouted with laughter.'"[1]

Davy does not meet his heroine until page 383. Even then it is merely by way of a miniature painting, which he worships until he meets the lady herself considerably later. She has all the proud blood, the noble bearing, the patrician features of Dorothy Manners, causing Davy to moon over her as though she were actually alive.

Despite such conventional goings-on, Davy is the only convincing central character in the trilogy as a whole, and yet

1. The Crossing. p.64

he never comes up to the vividness of even the lesser historical personages because of a precociousness which is even more pronounced than it is in Richard Carvel. The other characters, vowing that Davy is an old man in the body of a child, continually marvel at his mature knowledge and utterances.

The great weakness of this novel is that it breaks up directly the Clark expedition to the Illinois is done with. After the intense drama of that long episode the narrative merely wanders almost aimlessly about. Kenneth Roberts must have faced a similar problem in Northwest Passage: what to do after the expedition to St. Francis had returned? He sustained the narrative by retaining its dominant figure, Major Rogers, where Churchill had almost nothing more for Colonel Clark to do.

III. The Crisis

Many of the clichés and extravagances of Richard Carvel are intruded in this novel which, we must remember, was written before The Crossing. Here is a sample as Stephen Brice ponders his love:

"The vision of that proud figure of Miss Virginia was before him, and he revolted. What was kindness from Colonel Carvel and Mr. Brinsmade was charity from her."[1]

Or consider the scene at an auction of secessionist property seized by Union officials in St. Louis:

"How many of those mahogany pieces, so ruthlessly tumbled about before the public eye, meant a heartache! Wedding presents

1. The Crisis, p.201

of long ago, dear to many a bride with silvered hair, had been torn from the corner where the children had played--children who now, alas, were grown and gone to war. Yes, that was the Brussels rug that had lain before the fire, and which the little feet had worn in the coner. Those were the chairs the little hands had harnessed, four in a row, and fallen on its side was the armchair--the stagecoach itself. There were the books, held up to common gaze, that a beloved parent had thumbed with affection."[1]

When Eliphalet Hopper, the seedy but ambitious villain of the book, dares to offer marriage to Virginia she naturally turns from him in loathing, pondering thus upon Stephen Brice:

"A vision arose of a man beside whom Eliphalet was not worthy to crawl. She thought of Stephen as he had stood that evening in the sunset, and this proposal seemed a degradation. This brute dared to tempt her with money. Scalding words rose to her lips."[2]

The scalding words failed to burn Eliphalet. "The little eyes receded, and he waited a moment, seemingly to prolong a physical delight in the excitement and suffering of a splendid creature. The girl was breathing fast and deep."[3]

When her cousin, Clarence Colfax, who always expected to marry her, suggests that she do the logical thing by marrying Stephen instead, she is furious. "Virginia sprang to her feet. Unless you had seen her then, you had never known the woman in

1. The Crisis, p387
2. Ibid., p.409
3. Ibid., p.410

her glory."[1]

Stephen, like all Churchill's lovers, constantly dreams of his beloved. A mere haughty glance from Virginia as she passes on the other side of the street is sufficient to send him home to dream of her that night. The following sample also serves to illustrate Churchill's heavy, archaic sense of humor:

"It is no harm to admit (for the benefit of the Society for Psychical Research) that Stephen still dreamed of her."[2]

The editors of Time Magazine long ago evolved a compressed, striking style characterized by inversion of sentence structure as this which Churchill used years earlier:

"Still the old house stands....Still come into it the Brinsmades to marriage and to death."[3]

As one critic said of Time: "Backward ran the sentences until reeled the mind." Richard Carvel contains many more such inversions, but it is curious to note their survival in a novel which is greatly superior.

Churchill uses violent figures of speech which are amusing even when they are couched in deadly seriousness. In speaking of the horrors of a St. Louis hospital he says:

"The next day many good women went there, Rebel and Union alike, to have their hearts wrung."[4]

Judge Whipple, at the secessionist auction, doesn't care to have his heart wrung, but is content with simply having it

1. The Crisis, p.474
2. Ibid.,p.211
3. Ibid.,p.228
4. Ibid.,p.368

for lunch. "The Judge took a grim pleasure in eating his heart."[1]

As in Richard Carvel, the fictional characters for the most part sink to the commonplace level of types. Stephen Brice is too noble to live, but Virginia Carvel, despite her handicaps as a proud beauty, is much more human than her ancestor Dorothy Manners. Unlike the latter, Virginia has convictions on the great issues of the day--clouded by emotional reactions though they are--and much of her dialogue is quite normal. She does, of course, exercise the nineteenth-century prerogative of being inscrutable to man. Her father gives up trying to understand her, allowing that women beat him. It would seem that they beat Churchill, too.

In speaking of the trilogy as a whole we may say that, with the exceptions noted in The Crossing, the created characters tend to be inanimate types while the characters from history are literally re-created.

IV. General Statement of the Historical Background

Churchill's accuracy is evident in what is almost complete freedom from error throughout. This is all the more amazing in view of the fact that not a few books on straight history come off the press with relatively more mistakes than can be found here. Even Kenneth Roberts, with all his careful checking of research, referred in the first edition of Oliver Wiswell to a town near Boston as Norwood at a time when it was still South Dedham, I shall be fortunate if in this

1. The Crisis, p.386

thesis I have been as accurate as Churchill.

Of greater significance is the fact that the demand for conventional romance made such inroads upon space and time that, as I have indicated, in many places too little background is sketched in for the understanding of events. The one exception occurs in Book I of The Crossing where, as I have previously indicated, no intrusive romance disturbs the swift chronicling of history in fiction.

V. Comparison with Modern Work

The deficienies mentioned in the paragraph above can best be illustrated by contrast with Oliver Wiswell. This novel is much longer than Richard Carvel, but every page is concerned with the central thesis. There is no excess verbiage, no entangling alliances of the heart. The genuine and touching love story, while playing a relatively small part in the total action, is still such an inseparable part of the narrative that we never lose sight of it. Sally Leighton, when the Revolution comes, goes over with her family to the patriot side because she sincerely believes in it, but she does not on that account turn away the still Loyalist Oliver, as a Churchill heroine would have done.

Roberts does not dismiss in a single sentence, as does Churchill, such an epic event as the Revolution. We fight that war beside Oliver Wiswell from the siege of Boston to the surrender of Cornwallis. During the progress of the struggle Oliver goes to England, as Richard Carvel does, engaging in a

fruitless campaign to make the ruling class in England see the folly of their conduct of the war in America. In what is the only slow-moving part of the book, perhaps, we go with him to France on the same mission, following him, too, as he writes his history of the civil war in America for which he has been gathering material. Richard Carvel, on his return to Maryland, is asked concerning affairs in England, and he says:

"I say without vanity that I was able to enlighten them not a little, for I had learned a deeper lesson from the set into which I had fallen in London than if I had become the confidant of Rockingham himself."[1]

He means that having seen the dissolute lives led by the men engaged in ruling England he knows that such a class cannot possibly withstand the noblehearted resistance offered by the Americans; that he could learn more at the gaming table with Charles James Fox than by sitting in the House of Commons. Undoubtedly he could, since he is not, like Oliver Wiswell, an intellectual.

In making this comparison we must bear in mind that Roberts is now an old hand at historical fiction, while Richard Carvel was Churchill's first attempt.

The Tree of Liberty by Elizabeth Page, published in 1939, provides another pertinent comparison. As in the Roberts novel we actually fight the Revolution with the chief characters, and then we live through with them the turbulent years which follow.

1. Richard Carvel, p.408

The result is that this novel, like Oliver Wiswell, has an epic sweep of detail which Richard Carvel lacks.

In Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind, too, there is an epic sweep which is lacking in The Crisis. There is no moonlight and honeysuckle atmosphere in the Mitchell novel. We see the war in all its horror; we do not hear it talked about in terms of philosophical abstractions. To experience the reality of the march of Sherman to the sea we must discard the letter lightly speaking of it which Stephen Brice writes home; we must read of the campaign as Scarlett O'Hara suffered its impact at Tara.

Churchill has no sympathy for the South. Its admittedly brave first-line soldiers are fighting in the wrong cause, therefore little pity is wasted on them. Miss Mitchell is not interested in morality; in the right or wrong of slavery. Here, she makes clear, are certain great families of ante-bellum days in Georgia; here they are with the life and the culture they know ripped from them by war and conquest; here they are trying desperately to build up the shattered remnants of that other life during the ordeal of Reconstruction. Like Oliver Wiswell, this novel gives a vivid, gripping picture of war and readjustment seen through the eyes of persons most affected by it.

VI. Replies to Pattee's Three Questions

To answer the third question first--asking if these are more than mere novels, if they are, in fact, interpretations of America and Americanism--I certainly believe they are more than

mere novels, else I should not be thus inquiring into their worth. They are undoubtedly interpretations of America and Americanism, but it must be understood that such interpretations differ with the times and with the interpreters. Modern research and realistic thinking have deflated the ancient legends which puff up the pages of Richard Carvel; the moral issues of The Crisis have been subjected to critical analysis and we have found that economics, class stratifications, and sectionalism had much to with the origin of the Civil War; but the interpretation of manifest destiny set forth in The Crossing has not yet been cast aside.

In his letter of May 1 Mr. Churchill, in speaking of the doctrine of manifest destiny and the responsibility of the white man as held in The Winning of the West, says:

"The philosophy of the white man's burden, etc., is of course unrealistic, but it took me a good many years to see this."

Secondly, has Churchill here written the epic of the American republic? It seems to me that he has written an epic of the American republic, but that the epic, like the great American novel, is still to be written. This involves consideration of what consititutes a great historical novel, a matter which will be taken up under the next question.

Thirdly, will the trilogy survive beyond our time? In attempting an answer, let us first find out what the author was trying to do, and whether or not he succeeded.

In regard to Richard Carvel Pattee quotes Churchill: "'What I wanted to do...was to give a picture of the life of

colonial Maryland and Virginia, with special reference to Annapolis, and to contrast the people who made it with the corresponding element in England."[1]

He accomplishes this purpose, within certain limits as I have indicated previously, although Virginia does not come into the narrative.

In The Crisis the author chose his home city of St. Louis in order to show the meeting of two expanding types: the Puritan from New England and the former royalist, now slave owner, from the South. He succeeds admirably in picturing the clash between these two opposing philosophies.

The author named the final book The Crossing "because I have tried to express in it the beginnings of that great movement across the mountains which swept resistless over the Continent until at last it saw the Pacific itself."[2] Having wisely limited himself to the beginnings of this expansion, he succeeds fully in his purpose.

Accomplishment of purpose is hardly sufficient to answer the question: what makes great historical fiction? Is it epic sweep of the canvas? Is it the timeless quality of the dialogue, which I feel Roberts has and Churchill has not? Is it realism opposed to romanticism? Is it the verity of characterization? What, indeed, constitutes greatness in any novel, whether historical nor not?

1. Pattee, The New American Literature, p.94
2. The Crossing, Afterword

To take an example, when I say that Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath is a work of art, one of the great novels in our literature, on what do I base my opinion? First, the narrative moves swiftly, with constantly heightening dramatic power. Since this is a novel I believe that it should be first of all a good story. Second, although it is seen through the interpretation of the author, it is a phase of life starting at one point and finishing at another with no carefully developed, artificially manipulated plot. It has the wild contour of a mountain range rather than the orderly planning of a formal garden. Third, the characters are flesh and blood, not dummies--as so often is true in sociological fiction--for the mouthing of the author's thesis. Fourth, Steinbeck grinds no visible axe, if he grinds an axe at all. His method is dramatic presentation, not exposition nor didacticism. Here, we see, is the problem of the Okies. What is to be done about it? He himself presents no explicit solution. Fifth, the style serves the author's purpose admirably. It is simple, direct, forceful, dramatic.

There is something beyond all this. Why is Hamlet a classic? Beyond the intensity of the drama, beyond the fact that the play is fine theatre, a great show, what is the appeal that draws us back again and again? To me it is the bond created between us and the characters--particularly Hamlet himself. In him, as in Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia, and Horatio, we see the many-sided aspects of ourselves. Hamlet

especially appeals because in his manic-depressive nature with all his moods he represents us all. Claudius is no black villain; Gertrude no callous opportunist. They are literally we, the people.

This same bond is forged in The Grapes of Wrath. Applying the same test to Churchill, I believe he fails to meet it because his chief characters are not human beings. The fact that his historical figures, as well as certain of the minor fictional characters are real is not sufficient to establish this bond. That in itself is quite enough to put Churchill in second place. We identify ourselves with Hamlet, with Macbeth, with Othello, and, on the other face of the theatrical mask, with Falstaff, Sir Toby, and Malvolio, but if we all but scream with irritation at Richard Carvel, Dorothy Manners, Stephen Brice, and Virginia Carvel, how can we possibly establish any connection with them?

The archaic quality of much of Churchill's style and dialogue, which date the books as belonging to an era of romance forever gone, also helps to pull the trilogy down from any consideration as first rate. In Richard Carvel, especially, Churchill made his characters speak as he apparently felt people in those periods would have spoken.

Did Shakespeare make any attempt to make his characters in, for example, Julius Caesar, speak as people in that epoch must have spoken? Clearly not. Why should he have attempted to do so, when the Elizabethan theatre made no effort even to

costume its plays in period? Orson Welles in his production proved how timeless is the dialogue of this play. This speech of Casca, for example, (Act I, Scene ii) is almost word for word twentieth century:

"I know not what you mean by that; but, I am sure, Caesar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man."

It is significant that similar books written in the period of this trilogy were called romances. Churchill fails to reach the eminence of greatness, too, because he sacrificed so much to the needs of conventional romance. Stephen Crane, writing The Red Badge of Courage in the same period, a novel which broke with all convention, all tradition of the times, blazed a trail which few writers had the courage even to consider following.

What is Churchill's place in the entire range of American historical fiction? That question can be answered adequately only by investigating that range as I have done for one small phase of it. We can say, nevertheless, that this form divides into three general periods. First, in the long period from the beginnings to the 1890's historical fiction was written sporadically, by a very few authors. Chief among these were James Kirk Paulding, Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, William Gilmore Simms, all writing in the first half of the nineteenth century.

From Hawthorne to 1890 Stephen Crane seems to be the only figure of note. He tried to give the public a stiff dose of realism at a time when, in the great burst of historical romance of the last decade of the century, people wanted only the escapism which they found in the novels of Churchill, S. Weir Mitchell, Mary Johnston, Paul Leicester Ford, and Maurice Thompson. With the turn of the century, possibly because there came a shift in national temper with the coming of Roosevelt and the era of the strenuous life, the craze for historical romance died. Only Mary Johnston continued to work with the form.

The third phase begins with the second decade of the present century, and is still with us in force. The finest work, unquestionably, both in documentation and creation, has been done in this latest period. Freed from the restrictions of the nineteenth century, the emancipated novel--whether historical or non-historical--is now free to be what the good novel should be: the author's clarification of some phase of life.

The question remains: will the Churchill trilogy survive the indifference of time and the inertia of the printing press? Despite its manifest faults, despite the uneven quality of the several books, I agree with Pattee that it will live. Whether or not these are the finest works of the period is an issue for another investigation, as is the determination of the author's place in the entire field, but I believe that the excellence of the story-telling, the power of the narrative, will continue to attract readers.

Abstract

I. Introduction

Fred Lewis Pattee makes three statements concerning the trilogy, Richard Carvel, The Crossing, and The Crisis. First, the books will doubtless survive. Second, Churchill has here written the epic of the American republic. Third, the books are philosophic interpretations of America and Americanism. This thesis will attempt to find answers for the questions thus raised.

II. Historical Background

For Richard Carvel the investigation falls into four chief divisions. First, the pre-Revolutionary background of Maryland. Second, the causes of the Revolution. Third, Richard's life in England. Fourth, the Revolution seen briefly during the naval encounter between the Serapis and the Bon Homme Richard.

For The Crossing we consider first the account of the early years of Davy Ritchie's life; second, the description of George Rogers Clark's expedition; third, the discussion of the State of Franklin; fourth, the relating of the activities of General Wilkinson; fifth, the history of France in the Mississippi in this period; and sixth, the story of the purchase of Louisiana.

For The Crisis we consider first the Lincoln-Douglas debates; second, the work of Blair and Lyon; third, a comparison of Grant and Sherman in their civil life in St. Louis and later in their military service; fourth, the civil war in St. Louis

and then in Missouri at large.

III. The Trilogy as Literature

A. Churchill's method of writing: careful research; influenced by Thackeray; two years spent on each book.

B. The three books evaluated: Richard Carvel an excellent imitation of Thackeray but with fine contributions of the author's own; The Crossing the most natively American of the three, although it breaks in half with the ending of the Clark expedition; The Crisis an improvement over Richard Carvel but still showing many of the dated aspects of the latter work.

C. General statement of the historical background: amazing accuracy but not sufficient detail for the understanding of events.

D. Comparison with modern work: a reading of Oliver Wiswell, The Tree of Liberty, and Gone With the Wind shows the weaknesses of the trilogy in construction and period. Only the historical figures in Churchill come to life; conventional romance is followed too slavishly; and he fails to integrate the social, political, and personal lives of his people. Too, there is dull exposition, as in the section in The Crossing dealing with the purchase of Louisiana, when there should be dramatic action to perform at once both exposition and narration.

E. Replies to Pattee's Three Questions: Yes, these are more than mere novels. They are, too, interpretations of America and Americanism, but we must define what we mean by these terms, and remember that our definitions may vary at

different periods.

Secondly, I think that Churchill has written an epic of the American republic, but not the epic; that the latter has yet to be written.

Thirdly, in attempting to determine whether or not the trilogy may survive I have tried to show first his aim in each novel, and how well he succeeded; secondly I have pointed out that accomplishment of purpose does not alone make a great novel, that Churchill is not great in this respect because he follows tradition too closely and because the necessary bond of fellow feeling is not forged between his chief characters and the reader. Further, the archaic quality of much of the style and dialogue helps to date the novels as belonging to a definite period that, never good, is now gone; Thirdly, I have tried to place him roughly in the entire field of American historical fiction, but I indicate that a survey of the field must be done exhaustively in order to reach certain conclusions.

Finally I conclude that despite all its faults I agree that the trilogy will live. The fine art of narrative evident in the books will continue to attract readers.

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